STRATEGY AND POLICY DEPARTMENT
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, Rhode Island

FOREWORD

This syllabus for the Strategy and Policy Course for the College of Naval Warfare and Naval Command College, November 2026-February 2027, provides both an overview and a detailed, lesson-by-lesson description to assist students in their reading and preparation for seminar. Administrative information is also included.

Submitted:

Marybeth P. Ulrich
Chair
Department of Strategy and Policy

Approved:

HODGES.DOYLE.KENDALL.1043685798 Digitally signed by HODGES.DOYLE.KENDALL.1043685798
Date: 2026.09.21 15:10:11 -04'00'

Doyle K. Hodges
Dean of Academics
U.S. Naval War College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
COURSE DESCRIPTION	4
Course Introduction	4
Course Methodology	6
Course Policy and Guidance	7
Interconnections with Joint Planning Doctrine	7
Learning Outcomes	8
COURSE THEMES	10
MATCHING STRATEGY AND POLICY: THE PROCESS	10
1. The Interrelationship of Policy, Strategy, and Operations.	10
2. The Decision for War	11
3. Intelligence, Assessment, and Plans	11
4. The Instruments of National Power	12
5. Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment	13
6. War Termination	13
7. Winning the Peace and Preparing for War	14
MATCHING STRATEGY AND POLICY: THE ENVIRONMENT	14
8. The International Dimension	14
9. The Economic and Material Dimensions	15
10. Civil-Military Relations and the Institutional Dimension of Strategy	15
11. The Cultural and Social Dimensions	16
COURSE PROCESS AND STANDARDS	17
1. Methodology	17
2. Seminar Assignments	17
3. Lectures	17
4. Readings	17
5. Course Requirements	17
6. Seminar Essays	17
7. Comprehensive Assessment	19
8. Grading Standards for Written Work	19
9. Pretutorials and Tutorials	21
10. Faculty Office Hours	21
11. Seminar Preparation and Contribution	22
12. Grade Appeals	23
13. Academic Honor Code	24
14. Super Intelligence and Large Language Models	25

15. Student Survey 26
16. Online Resources 26

CASE STUDIES

I. Theories of War, Strategy, and Great Power Competitions 28

II. The Peloponnesian War: Peace, War, and Deterrence in a Long-Term Competition 34

III. The Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon: Maritime Versus Continental Security Strategies 40

IV. Imperial Germany from the Wars of Unification to the First World War - The Rise and Fall of a Peer Competitor 46

V. The Interwar World: The Challenges of Winning Peace, and the Re-Emergence of Great Power Competition 52

VI. The Second World War and the Rise of the Superpowers 58

VII. The Early Cold War: National Security, Ideology, and Domestic Politics, 1945-1953 64

VIII. The Middle Cold War: U.S., Soviet, & Chinese Competition in the Third World, 1953-1968 72

IX. The Late Cold War: From Détente to the Collapse of the Soviet Union, 1969-1991 78

X. The Global War on Terror (GWOT) Multi-Theater Warfare Against State and Non-State Adversaries 84

XI. Global Challenges: The Future of American Power and the China Challenge 88

STRATEGY AND POLICY DEPARTMENT FACULTY 95

COURSE LECTURE SCHEDULE 105

STRATEGY AND POLICY COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Introduction

In the waning days of the Vietnam War, Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner served as President of the Naval War College. He saw a glaring need to revolutionize the curriculum in professional military education. Rather than training officers, he sought to educate leaders. Admiral Turner argued:

> If you attempt to make this a prep school for your next duty assignment, you will have missed the purpose of being here. If we trained you for a particular assignment or type of duty, the value of this college would be short-lived. We want to educate you to be capable of doing well in a multitude of future duties…. Your objective here should be to improve your reasoning, logic, and analysis.[1]

The Strategy and Policy Course embodies Turner's mission to place education over training by challenging students to grapple with the complex relationship among policy, strategy, and operations, lifting perspectives above the tactical level while sharpening critical thinking about joint matters. Critical strategic thinking constitutes the hallmark of the Strategy and Policy Course. We achieve this goal through graduate-level interdisciplinary seminars employing a unique methodology built upon two core components: the study of foundational theories of war, and close analysis of historical and contemporary case studies. The Strategy and Policy Course uses this case-study approach, integrating a diverse array of academic disciplines, including history, economics, political science, and security studies, to assess both historical and contemporary conflicts. This methodology exposes students to historical case studies in which senior political and military leaders, as well as staff planners, struggle to use the military and other instruments of national power to achieve the purpose and objectives of the state in both war and peacetime.

The course emphasizes the vital importance of orchestrating multinational cooperation while integrating all instruments of national power. Moreover, it instills in students the awareness and ability to perform comprehensive assessments at all stages of a conflict, and to communicate such assessments with clarity and precision. Finally, the course challenges students to think critically about the full spectrum of conflict: from prewar planning and the decision to go to war, to wartime adaptation, conflict termination, and the ultimate transition to peace.

After examining past conflicts in a disciplined way, students emerge better equipped to grasp the values of the profession of arms espoused by the U.S. armed forces. Students comprehend more fully the capacity of U.S. military forces to conduct the full range of operations in pursuit of national interests. Moreover, students better understand why and how the U.S. military establishment is organized to plan, execute, and sustain joint, interagency, and multinational operations.

[1] Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, "Challenge: A New Approach to Professional Education," *Naval War College Review*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Nov-Dec 1972), p. 6.

In war, of course, the enemy always seeks to thwart one's plans while imposing high costs. The Strategy and Policy Course emphasizes that a war's outcome is contingent on the actions taken by those engaged in the conflict. Skillful adversaries exploit strategic vulnerabilities and operational missteps. They also employ surprise, denial, and deception to their advantage. Furthermore, an enemy's capabilities might prove difficult to overcome. Asymmetric strategies and capabilities can preclude decisive outcomes. Adept strategists and operational planners understand that the enemy's ingenuity, determination, and actions help decide the war's outcome. This course amply illustrates the truism: "the enemy gets a vote."

While the enemy's actions influence the end of the war, that does not excuse combatants from planning for that conflict's end, and the peace to follow. Ending a war successfully requires effective planning and implementation to answer three key questions. How far must your side go militarily to set the conditions for peace? What should your side demand at the negotiating table to secure a favorable peace? And what steps need to be put in place after the war to maintain that peace? Each question carries risks. Going too far militarily risks escalation, foreign intervention, or counterattack. A harsh peace proposal risks renewed war while a generous peace proposal may terminate the conflict but allow an adversary to rebuild quickly. Because an adversary may choose to redress an unsatisfactory outcome in war at a future date, a peace that leaves a regime in power may require constant monitoring or containment. A peace that overthrows a regime, on the other hand, may require occupation and/or the creation of a more peaceful successor government. Both require planning, continued commitment to "winning the peace," and a willingness to consider maintaining forces in the region and higher defense expenditures even after the conflict is terminated.

The works of prominent strategic thinkers—notably Carl von Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mao Zedong, Thucydides, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and Julian Corbett—provide analytical frameworks that students use to understand the relationship between strategy and operations, and between desired political outcomes and the threat and use of military force. The influence of these classic works on current strategic thought cannot be denied. Reflecting on his education, General Colin Powell wrote, "Clausewitz was an awakening for me. His *On War*, written 106 years before I was born, was like a beam of light from the past, still illuminating present-day military quandaries."[2] Sir Basil Liddell Hart expands the horizons of the other theorists, looking at the utility of *all* instruments of power, by single states and in coalition, to achieve political objectives in war and peacetime. Paul Kennedy examines long-term competitions, and the relationship between economic development, military power, and strategic success.

The case studies provide a means to evaluate and discuss how strategic planners and military leaders in real-world circumstances have addressed the problems associated with using force to attain national objectives. They provide an opportunity to examine three distinct types, or "boxes," of war. Like boxes, wars may nest within one another. The first box comprises major, protracted wars fought between coalitions in multiple theaters for high stakes. The second box refers to regional wars fought within single theaters, perhaps involving coalitions, typically

[2] Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 207.

for shorter durations, and often for lesser stakes. The third box comprises insurgencies fought within single countries against failing, emerging, or well-established states.

We study multiple cases involving each box of war. In several cases, these three types of war take place at once, resulting in "wars within wars." During the Vietnam War, for example, an insurgency raged in South Vietnam during a regional war between the United States and North Vietnam, all encompassed within the context of a global Cold War. In-depth analysis of wide-ranging case studies involving the use of force prepares students to think not only about current strategic and operational problems but also problems they might face in the future.

To prepare for operational and strategic leadership, students in the Strategy and Policy Course analyze the leadership of some of history's most famous statesmen, admirals, and generals. Studying these historic figures provides insight into recurrent problems confronting senior leaders and planners as they craft strategies for carrying out wartime operations. However, the need for skilled leadership extends beyond senior political and military leaders. Their staffs—not to mention interagency and coalition partners—must be prepared in intellect, temperament, and doctrine to undertake different types of operations, assess and fight a diverse array of enemies, and make transitions between phases of war as well as between war and its aftermath. Leaders and planners must overcome the fog and friction that hinder the execution of operations, as well as take prudent steps to *deter* war if possible. Finally, successful leadership at the strategic and operational levels of war requires effective civil-military relations, which take into account the dynamic interaction among politics, strategy, and operational realities. The Strategy and Policy Course aims to impart the habits of strategic thought, and the strategic literacy required to assume positions of increasing responsibility throughout the national security enterprise. Applying the foundational theories of war and the lessons gleaned from critical analysis of historical and contemporary cases studies will help the United States and its partners and allies achieve the intellectual overmatch required to prevail in great power competition.

Course Methodology

The course comprises eleven case studies. The first introduces students to foundational theoretical tools to build strategic literacy and a common vocabulary that can be applied in subsequent case studies and ultimately the joint warfighting environment. The next nine case studies address historical wars resulting in the development of a diverse knowledge set. Studying what occurs in a wide variety of conflicts and why, develops judgment, reasoning, logic, and analysis to more effectively approach contemporary and future challenges. The final case provides an opportunity to apply knowledge obtained earlier in the course to the contemporary environment.

Each case study includes expansive readings. Though the amount of reading may be daunting, analyzing vast amounts of evidence and identifying the most salient points is an essential skill when engaging with the complex problems of the contemporary warfighting environment. Lectures in each case study go beyond the scope of the readings. They also provide tools to structure the evidence found in the readings while illustrating theory and common themes. Finally, the lectures provide students with an opportunity to engage with subject matter experts.

During the trimester students will write essays informed by the readings, lectures, and engagement with seminar moderators. Each essay requires students to analyze a strategic problem in a structured, critical, and detailed manner. Though one rarely has time to think in such detail in the joint warfighting environment, structured and detailed thinking prepares students for addressing complex, real-world problems and communicating potential solutions.

The readings, lectures, and student essays empower graduate-level, discussion-based seminars. It is in seminar that the case studies culminate with small groups of students critically and analytically interacting with their colleagues and their military-civilian teaching teams. The seminar is the laboratory where students can challenge one another and themselves. In the tradition of Clausewitzian critical analysis, students will develop strategic arguments by investigating leadership decisions, considering alternative courses of action, and identifying better alternatives. The critical analyses of historical case studies in seminar will set the foundation for a summative wargaming event and comprehensive essay at the end of the course.

Course Policy and Guidance

The Strategy and Policy Course examines Senior-Level Education Joint Learning Areas and Objectives for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) established by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff via the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), CJCSI 1800.01G, signed April 15, 2024. Apart from meeting OPMEP objectives, the Strategy and Policy Course addresses additional areas of emphasis put forward in the United States Navy's guidance on Professional Military Education, the intent articulated by the President of the Naval War College, and strategic challenges highlighted by the Department of War. Lastly, the course reflects the experience and judgment of the Naval War College faculty and assessments offered by the students.

Interconnections with Joint Planning Doctrine

The critical, analytical, and strategic thinking emphasized in the Strategy and Policy Course directly supports the formulation of theater strategies and operational planning taught in other core courses at the Naval War College. Joint planning doctrine links strategy, plans, operations, and assessments. Developing such connections is not automatic, however. It requires planners who can critically analyze and operationalize strategy-informed plans. Such strategic literacy is especially vital in the first two steps of the Joint Planning Process (JPP): Initiate Planning and Mission Analysis. These two steps require a clear understanding of the strategic environment, strategic direction, and risk-informed analysis that balances objectives and resources.

Moreover, all Strategy and Policy Course themes directly tie into the principles of the Joint Planning Process (JPP) and theater strategy formulation. For example, the questions from Course Theme #1 (The Interrelationship of Policy, Strategy, and Operations) guide planners in conducting strategically aligned mission analysis (step two of the JPP). Similarly, during Course of Action (COA) Development (step three of the JPP), planners must evaluate whether a proposed course of action achieves both military and strategic objectives. The tools and frameworks from Course Theme #4 (The Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations) provide

the conceptual foundation for this task. There are many more examples of the symbiosis between the themes of the Strategy and Policy Course, the Joint Planning Process, and the formulation of theater strategies. As a result, the strategic thought emphasized in the Strategy and Policy Course is more than a mere standalone topic whose usefulness expires upon completion of this course. On the contrary, a U.S. Naval War College graduate with fluency in the concepts from across the three core courses of Strategy and Policy, Joint Military Operations, and National Security Decision Making can avoid the mistake of conducting military planning in a vacuum by ensuring that operations are aligned with national strategic direction.

Learning Outcomes

The Department of War has adopted outcomes-based assessment of student learning. To that end, the Naval War College has developed the following College of Naval Warfare and Naval Command College (JPME II) Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

PLO 1. Demonstrate joint-warfighting leadership when integrating the instruments of national power across the continuum of competition.

PLO 2. Create national security strategies designed for contemporary and future security environments.

PLO 3. Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms at the strategic level of war.

PLO 4. Apply theory, history, concepts of sea power, and doctrine through critical thought in professional communication.

The Strategy and Policy Course is especially robust in supporting Program Learning Outcome 4 as the entire course is based on case studies. This methodology allows students to apply critical thinking skills through analysis of theoretical, historical, and contemporary examples. Communication of theory, history, concepts of sea power, and doctrine is practiced through seminar discussion, oral tutorials and presentations, practical exercises, and written essays and examinations.

In support of the overarching program learning outcomes, the Strategy and Policy Department has defined the following Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), and expects that students who successfully complete the Strategy and Policy Course will be able to:

CLO 1. Evaluate, through Clausewitzian critical analysis, political and strategic arguments, and alternative courses of action.

CLO 2. Evaluate strategic principles, relevant theorists, and historical case studies to address complex problems of strategy and policy.

CLO 3. Analyze how various types of states generate and employ national power in maritime and other domains.

CLO 4. Evaluate choices of political and military leaders related to the origins, conduct, and termination of war.

STRATEGY AND POLICY COURSE THEMES

MATCHING STRATEGY AND POLICY:
THE PROCESS

1. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF POLICY, STRATEGY, AND OPERATIONS
2. THE DECISION FOR WAR
3. INTELLIGENCE, ASSESSMENT, AND PLANS
4. THE INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER
5. INTERACTION, ADAPTATION, AND REASSESSMENT
6. WAR TERMINATION
7. WINNING THE PEACE AND PREPARING FOR WAR

MATCHING STRATEGY AND POLICY:
THE ENVIRONMENT

8. THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION
9. THE ECONOMIC AND MATERIAL DIMENSIONS
10. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION
11. THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

The Strategy and Policy Department has developed eleven interrelated course themes. They are neither a checklist of prescriptions nor a set of "school solutions," for the conduct of war can never be reduced to a formula or set of answers. Rather, they are categories of questions designed to provoke original thought, broad discussion, and careful evaluation of alternative strategic courses of action. These questions apply to political leaders and military leaders to provide decision-making guidance. The themes are divided into two broad categories: the process themes—those dealing with formulating and executing strategies to support national policies; and the environment—the constraints and opportunities bounding the choices. The environmental themes are akin to the hand of strategic cards each side has been dealt, while the process themes concern how to play them.

MATCHING STRATEGY AND POLICY: THE PROCESS

1. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF POLICY, STRATEGY, AND OPERATIONS

What were the most important political interests and objectives of the antagonists? How did these interests and objectives originate? What value did each participant in each case study place on its political objectives? Were these interests and objectives clearly articulated and understood? Were short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives compatible or in conflict?

Were the problems that gave rise to war susceptible to military resolution? If leaders decided to employ armed force in pursuit of political objectives, how did they plan to use other instruments of power in support of their strategy? Were these plans appropriate? Were costs and risks anticipated and commensurate with benefits and rewards?

What strategic guidance did political leaders provide the military, and what restraints did they impose? How did guidance and restraints impede or promote operational success? What strategies did the belligerents adopt? Did their strategies strike an appropriate balance between defense and offense? To what extent did strategies support their respective policies? At any point, did strategy drive policy? What assumptions did statesmen and military leaders make about the contribution of military objectives to attaining overarching political objectives? Was the outcome more the product of sound strategy and superior leadership on the part of the victors or of self-defeating courses of action by the losing side?

2. THE DECISION FOR WAR

What were the short-term and long-term causes of the war? What were the impediments to deterrence or compromise? Were better deterrent or appeasement strategies available? Why did deterrence fail?

Was the decision to go to war rational? Was the choice for war based on accurate assessment of one's own capabilities, military potential, and vulnerabilities as well as those of the enemy? What role, if any, did military leaders play in the decision for war? Did they offer political leadership an analysis of the available strategic options? How did political objectives shape the decision for war? If war was preemptive or preventive, how accurate was the information about enemy action or potential? Was the outbreak of the war optimally timed from the standpoint of the belligerent that initiated it? To what extent did predictions about the behavior of coalition partners and neutral states factor into the decision for war? If the war began with a surprise attack, what impact did that attack have? If the decision for war involved an intervention in an ongoing conflict, was that intervention decisive?

How did race, ethnicity, religion, and ideology affect decisions? Did ambition, concern for reputation, historical analogies, or arrogance affect the decision-makers? Were peaceful strategies, potentially as promising or more promising than military ones, dismissed or overlooked? Did a third party drag major powers into a war that none of them wanted? Did one power miscalculate how another would respond to an aggressive or threatening action?

3. INTELLIGENCE, ASSESSMENT, AND PLANS

How reliable and complete was intelligence on the interests, intentions, capabilities, and will of rivals and potential enemies? Did politics or culture affect the gathering of intelligence? If a belligerent suffered a surprise attack, why was it taken by surprise? How successful were each belligerent's efforts to shape perceptions of its capabilities and intentions?

How well did each side assess its own and the enemy's strengths and weaknesses? To what extent did civilian and military leaders correctly understand the nature of the war upon which they were embarking? How well did each belligerent understand the cultural values, religious practices, political system, military traditions, and military potential of its enemy? How was that understanding reflected in war plans? Were plans based on assumptions of racial superiority over the enemy? Did planners objectively evaluate the enemy's capabilities, or were their assessments distorted by ethnic or racial bias?

What planning process did each belligerent have? What kind of mechanisms did each have to integrate non-military instruments of power? To what extent did the planners think about strategic issues, not simply operational concerns? How did planners prioritize theaters and fronts? If allies were included in the planning process, how did their participation modify war plans? Was a serious effort made to study previous wars, and if so, how did it affect planning?

Did plans bear the imprint of service doctrines or reflect accepted principles of war? Did plans identify the enemy's strategic center(s) of gravity or critical vulnerabilities? To what extent did plans rely upon deception, surprise, information operations, or psychological operations? What were the strategic effects planners sought to achieve? Did planning allow for the fog, friction, uncertainty, and chance of war? If a war of attrition was likely, did planners anticipate the stages through which such a war might pass and the full range of operations that might be necessary? Did the initial plans consider how and when the war would be terminated and what the nature of postwar peace would be?

4. THE INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

Did political and military leaders understand the strategic capabilities, effects, and limitations of the forms of national power at their disposal? Did leaders consider the political, financial, social, and logistical constraints on the employment of national power? How well were diplomacy, economic initiatives, and information operations coordinated with military operations?

How well did diplomacy support military power? How well did military power support diplomacy? Did diplomats manage escalation to negotiate a timely and advantageous settlement? How well were economic resources used in support of political aims? If one belligerent engaged in economic warfare, how accurate were its assumptions about the effects of economic levers on the enemy? What role did other instruments of national power play in economic warfare? Did leaders develop an effective information campaign to reach multiple audiences? Were those information campaigns based on a sound understanding of the culture and society of their targets? How well did political and military leaders engage in strategic communication with their domestic audiences? How persuasive were the justifications for war and for the strategies to fight it?

Did military leadership integrate different forms of power for maximum strategic effectiveness? What limitations prevented optimal integration of land, naval, air, space, and cyber operations? Did military leaders understand the capabilities and limitations of their own

and other branches of their armed forces? Did strategists exploit opportunities created by technological innovation? Did civilian and military leaders apply realistic intelligence estimates to analyze possible courses of action? How did technological change affect strategic results? Did a belligerent make effective use of unconventional or irregular warfare?

5. INTERACTION, ADAPTATION, AND REASSESSMENT

How accurately did belligerents foresee the consequences of interaction with their enemies? Did reassessment reveal flawed assumptions of earlier assessments? Did reassessment reconsider the enemy's capabilities after the initial interaction? Did the existence of weapons of mass destruction influence that interaction? How did interaction alter initial strategies? Was one side able to make its adversary fight on its own preferred terms? How well did strategists and commanders adapt to what the enemy did? If war became an attritional conflict, how successful were the belligerents in intensifying the effects of attrition upon their opponents? Was the side that began on the defensive able to make a successful transition to the offensive?

In opening or contesting a new theater, did the belligerent do so to continue a preexisting strategy, to overcome a stalemate in the original theater, to implement a new strategy to achieve a new policy objective, or to seize a new opportunity? Did it involve fighting the enemy in a different location or fighting an entirely new enemy? Did it make strategic sense to open or contest the new theater? Did the environment in the new theater favor operational success? How did the new theater influence the larger war? Did it make strategic sense to close a theater? What role did maritime power play in opening the theater, supporting operations, and closing the theater?

If initial strategies proved successful, did that strategic success drive changes, whether wise or foolish, in political objectives? If initial strategies proved unsuccessful or too costly, was there a reassessment of political objectives, strategy, or both? Did one or both sides attempt to widen the conflict through horizontal or vertical escalation, or to increase its magnitude and duration by additional mobilization of resources? If an additional state or other parties intervened in the conflict, did this produce reassessment of policy and strategy? If there were adjustments in policy or strategy during the war, were these based on rational and timely reexamination of the relationship between the political objective and the means available?

6. WAR TERMINATION

Did the war end because of the collapse of one of the belligerents, the capitulation of one of the sides, mutual exhaustion, or the negotiation of a settlement? If negotiations began before the end of hostilities, how well did military operations support diplomacy and vice versa? Did either side squander opportunities for a successful or partially successful end to the war? Did war termination occur only after a change of leadership on the losing side? If the war ended unexpectedly, did that surprise catch the victor unprepared to manage war termination?

Did the winning side consider how far to go militarily to successfully terminate the conflict? Did it halt military operations prematurely or overstep the culminating point of victory? Were specific demands considered to fulfill their political objectives? How did allies manage competing interests? If there was a truce, did military or political leaders negotiate its terms? Did the terms of the truce shape the postwar settlement?

If the victorious belligerents had achieved the unlimited aim of overthrowing the enemy regime, were they ready to carry out occupation of the defeated country? If the victorious belligerents had pursued a limited aim and left the enemy regime in place, were they ready to execute, if necessary, a postwar policy of containment of the defeated country? Did the postwar settlement effectively incorporate the defeated state into the international system?

7. WINNING THE PEACE AND PREPARING FOR WAR

To what extent did the postwar settlement satisfy the political objectives of the winning state or coalition? To what extent did the losing side accept its political and military losses? Did the end of the war leave the victor in a position to enforce peace? Had the victor planned adequately for the transition from war to peace?

Was the underlying conflict that gave rise to war resolved by that war? How did the outcome of interstate war affect the geostrategic position of the victors in relation to the vanquished? Did the victor attempt to reshape the international order? Did the members of the winning coalition maintain the collective will to enforce peace?

How were the lessons of the previous war absorbed into the policies, military thought, and doctrine of victorious, vanquished, and uncommitted powers? Did strategic leaders presume the next war would be similar to the last one? Did they strive to create conditions that would make the next war utterly dissimilar to the previous one? Was military-technological progress seen as likely to favor the offense or the defense in the next war? How did military and political leaders manage the transition from resolving a past war to preparing for a future conflict?

MATCHING STRATEGY AND POLICY: THE ENVIRONMENT

8. THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF STRATEGY

How successful were political and military leaders at seizing opportunities to isolate their adversaries from potential allies? What common interests or policies unified coalition partners? Did coalition partners have the same primary enemy and agree on strategy? What were the capabilities and limitations of each partner in the coalition? How effective was strategic coordination and burden sharing within a coalition? How freely did information, intelligence, and resources pass among its members? How important was coalition cohesion to the outcome of the war, and how robust was that cohesion? How did diplomacy contribute to coalition cohesion?

Did coalition strategies solidify it or split it apart? Did these strategies strengthen or weaken the opposing coalition? Did allies act to support, restrain, or control one another? If a coalition disintegrated, was this the result of internal stress, external pressure, or both? Did coalition dynamics help or hinder efforts to match strategy to policy? What impact did coalition dynamics have on war termination? Did the winning coalition persist after the end of the war, and why?

Did war change the international system by changing the international distribution of power or by creating new institutions? What were the implications of the war for the belligerents' political stability, social structure, economic viability, and military potential? Did the war stimulate activity by non-state actors?

9. THE ECONOMIC AND MATERIAL DIMENSIONS OF STRATEGY

What economic system did each country possess: predominantly agricultural, mercantile, industrial, or post-industrial? To what extent did government direct or control economic activity, and with what results? Did the defense-industrial base produce the weapons and military technology the country needed? Was a belligerent able to benefit from ongoing or recent waves of technological innovation? Did a gap open over time between strategic commitments and resources available to support those commitments? If so, what were the consequences of that gap for the country's security?

How effectively did each belligerent mobilize its economic resources? How did a belligerent's financial strength, natural resources, manufacturing plant, scientific expertise, and technological prowess affect its ability to wage war? Were belligerents able to manage financial constraints? What were the implications of a belligerent's public finances for staying power in a long-term competition? Which of the belligerents had superior logistics for moving manpower and materiel to the theaters and sustaining forces? Was the outcome of the competition due more to material superiority or superior strategy?

If a belligerent adopted economic warfare, how appropriate was this strategy and how well was it integrated with other strategies? How adept were belligerents at overcoming attacks on their material capability to wage war?

10. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF STRATEGY

What were the roles, relationships, and functions of the institutions involved in developing strategy and managing national security? How did theater commanders fit into the overall chain of command? How were military forces organized? How well did that system facilitate planning, executing, and training for joint and combined warfare? How freely was information shared among military and civilian agencies?

How did rivalry among military services affect strategy and the presentation of a coherent military view on strategy to civilian leadership? Did organizational problems undermine civil-military relations? Did competition within the government or among its sections obscure military leaders' understanding of the political objectives? How did lack of clarity or constancy in political aims affect civil-military relations? If political leaders demanded something from the military that it could not effectively deliver, or if they imposed stringent restraints on the use of force, how did military leadership respond? If military leaders proposed operations that promised to be militarily effective but entailed significant political risk, how did civilian leadership react? How attuned were military leaders to the need to assess and manage political risk? How did the personalities of the key military and civilian leaders affect the civil-military relationship?

Did the transition from war to peace, or from one form of war to another, lead to institutional changes in a country's national security system? How well did new national security institutions and processes perform in the next war? Were new institutions and old institutions able to work together effectively? Did institutional changes affect how the political and military leadership shared responsibility for strategy?

11. THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF STRATEGY

How did a belligerent's culture, society, ideology, and religion affect the strategy-policy match? Did a belligerent possess a discernable "strategic culture" or "way of war" and, if so, did this allow its adversary to predict and exploit its behavior? Did belligerents understand the values, social relationships, and institutions of all parties?

How did military power affect the course and outcome of any underlying ideological struggle? Did military or non-military factors have the greatest impact on the outcome? If the war involved a struggle for mass political allegiance, did culture, values, social structure, or religion give either belligerent an advantage? Did the existence of marginalized groups within the belligerent's society create strategic vulnerabilities that its opponents could exploit? Did information operations or strategic communication reinforce or negate any such advantage? How did ethnic or religious passions affect the conduct and outcome of the competition or the war? How did ideas about race influence the political objectives, strategies, and operations of each belligerent? Did the existence of a racial hierarchy undermine the war effort? Was the war marked by terrorism or insurgency? Was it possible for external powers to resolve the conflict by military or diplomatic intervention?

Was the Clausewitzian triangle—the relationship among the government, the people, and the military—able to withstand battlefield reverses, catastrophic damage to the homeland, or the strain of protracted war? If the war was protracted, how successful was the victorious side in weakening its adversary's society? Did military strategy deliver sufficient incremental dividends or periodic successes to maintain support for the war? Or did strategy diminish domestic support for the war? How effectively did belligerents mobilize and manage public opinion? Did communications media outside governmental control make it difficult for political leaders to manage public opinion at home and influence attitudes abroad? Did the "passions of the people" make it difficult for leaders to maintain the proper relationship between policy and strategy?

COURSE PROCESS AND STANDARDS

1. Methodology. Each case study will be examined through a combination of lectures, readings, tutorials, student essays, and seminars.

2. Seminar Assignments. Each student will be assigned to a seminar for the duration of the course. Each seminar will be led by a faculty team composed of a practitioner and a civilian academic.

3. Lectures. Students will attend lectures relating to each case study. Lectures impart knowledge about the case study, provide insight into strategic problems, and stimulate learning and discussion in seminar. Students are highly encouraged to address questions to each lecturer. The arguments expressed in Strategy and Policy course lectures reflect the lecturer's expertise and do not necessarily represent the Naval War College, the U.S. Navy, the Department of War, or any part of the U.S. Government.

4. Readings. Before seminar, students are expected to read the books and articles assigned for that week, as well as the student essays prepared for that week. These assigned texts are the only readings required to prepare for seminar, write essays, and prepare for the comprehensive essay. Books must be returned upon completing the requirements for the course.

5. Course Requirements. In addition to viewing lectures, completing the assigned readings, and contributing to seminar discussions, students will write three essays: two seminar essays and one comprehensive essay. In computing the final grade, the following percentages will be used:

Essay 1—25 percent
Essay 2—25 percent
Comprehensive essay—25 percent
Seminar Preparation and Contribution—25 percent

A final course grade of B- or above is required to earn a master's degree and a C- or above for JPME I credit. Grading takes place in accordance with the U.S. Naval War College *Faculty Handbook.*

6. Seminar Essays. Each student will submit two essays, each ranging from 2,600-3,200 words (the word count does not include citations), on questions listed in the syllabus. Essays should be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced. The seminar moderators will assign students their two essay questions at the beginning of the term. When preparing an essay, the student will find all information required to answer the question in the readings and lectures for that case study. Students shall not consult sources outside of those listed in this syllabus without obtaining written permission from their moderators. For matters relating to the format for documentation, students should use either footnotes or endnotes. Since all readings are assigned in the syllabus, a bibliography is optional. Students should consult *The Chicago Manual of Style.*

Purpose, goal, and key elements of essays. The essay offers an opportunity to undertake a strategic analysis. A good essay is an analytical "thought piece" in which the author presents a

thesis supported by arguments based on the information available in the assigned readings and lectures.

Strategy and Policy Course essays challenge students to develop the critical thinking and professional communications skills necessary for applying strategic concepts to military planning at the operational and strategic levels of war. Joint doctrine asserts that a key task for military planners entails understanding and articulating the complex relationship among national interests, government policy, desired objectives, and real-world action. Essays provide students with an opportunity to grapple with these relationships by studying complex problems, proposing suitable solutions, and assessing the implications of their suggested courses of action.

Analytical essay writing in the Strategy and Policy course builds core skills that directly enhance a student's effectiveness in several key steps of the Joint Planning Process (JPP), as described in JP 5-0. Most notably, it sharpens the critical thinking required for Mission Analysis by providing opportunities to dissect complex strategic problems, evaluate competing objectives, and identify underlying assumptions. Additionally, the emphasis on structured argumentation and evidence-based reasoning supports Course of Action (COA) development, where planners must craft options that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable within the strategic context. Likewise, the ability to compare alternative courses of action, articulate risks, and weigh trade-offs is invaluable during COA Analysis and Comparison. While writing analytical essays throughout the course, students cultivate the intellectual habits necessary to contribute strategic thought to joint operational planning, ensuring that plans align with sound strategy and policy.

Because essays in the Strategy and Policy Course are meant to argue for the strongest course of action, they are not research papers. As a result, essays should not contain historical narrative for narrative's sake. The recitation of factual data should be minimized; students should present only that historical narrative necessary to support the thesis and argue their courses of action.

The essay offers an opportunity to undertake strategic analysis. A good essay is an analysis in which the author presents a thesis supported by arguments based on the assigned reading and lectures.

There are **five** elements to a good essay:

1. Answers the question(s) assigned.

2. Has a thesis that answers the question.

3. Marshals evidence to support that thesis. Provides analysis of the issues in relationship to the appropriate course themes and concepts, and makes a clear, unambiguous, substantial argument in support of the essay's thesis as well as addressing all parts of the posed question.

4. Identifies and addresses opposing arguments or limitations in the core thesis and supporting evidence. This is the counterargument. The essay should also

rebut the counterargument. The rebuttal of the counterargument is equally important to demonstrate why the argument is better than any potential weaknesses the counterargument poses.

5. It is written in a clear and well-organized fashion (spelling, construction, punctuation, grammar, syntax, format, etc.).

These five elements form the foundation of a rubric that defines essay expectations, outlines grading criteria, and guides feedback on student progress. The ability to compose a succinct thesis, marshal evidence to prove the thesis, and rebut the most important counterarguments to it is the hallmark of analytical thinking that allows students to communicate ideas with clarity and precision.

Submission

All Strategy and Policy essays will be submitted to their moderators electronically through Turnitin Assignments set up in each Blackboard seminar course. Students may assess their papers through the Turnitin Student Workbooks in Blackboard to benefit from Turnitin's Similarity Report prior to final paper submission. For students, this will highlight areas that require additional consideration. For the Similarity Score in Turnitin, there is no percentage that means "all clear" and no percentage that means "big trouble." Papers with as low as a 10% similarity score may have serious plagiarism concerns. Turnitin requires students to go through the markup line by line to identify and correct any problems. When submitting papers through the Blackboard seminar course, students are still able to revise and resubmit the assignment in their student Turnitin folder up to the assignment deadline. However, submitting papers for evaluation to moderators through Blackboard is final. If there are Turnitin issues identified by a student after submission, the student should immediately contact the seminar moderators.

The student will normally submit the completed essay to each moderator, following the instruction in the previous paragraph, no later than 0830 on the day before the seminar meets. If seminars meet on Monday or immediately following a federal holiday, students will submit their essays no later than 0830 on the day the seminar meets. Essays submitted late without permission from the moderators will receive severe deductions in grading. Please see the section titled "Grading Standards for Written Work" for a more complete explanation of penalties for late work. In addition to submitting the essay to the moderators, the student will distribute a copy to each member of the seminar**. Students shall read all essays prepared by their seminar colleagues before the seminar meets.**

7. Comprehensive Essay. Students will write a comprehensive final essay at the end of the term. This essay draws upon the entire course: its theoretical frameworks, course themes, and historical case studies. The final must be entirely the student's own work. It must be completed without any discussion or consultation with others, including Large Language Models and Super Intelligence resources.

8. Grading Standards for Written Work. All written work in the Strategy and Policy Course will be graded according to the following standards:

A+ (97-100): The essay indicates brilliance and is ready for publication. The essay answers the question in a way that offers a genuinely new understanding of the subject. The thesis is exceptionally clear and well-focused on the entire question. The counterargument and rebuttal are addressed completely. The writing is clear throughout and exceptionally well-organized.

A (94-96): Work of superior quality that demonstrates a high degree of original, critical thought. The essay intelligently answers the question. The thesis is clearly articulated and addresses the entire question. Evidence is relevant and purposeful. Consideration of arguments, counterargument, and rebuttal are comprehensive. The organization is especially clear throughout the essay.

A- (90-93): A well-written, insightful essay that is above the average expected of graduate work and does not have major flaws. The essay skillfully answers the question. The thesis is articulated. Evidence is significant throughout. Arguments, counter-argument, and rebuttal are presented effectively. The essay is coherently organized and very clearly written.

B+ (87-89): A graduate-level essay that meets all five elements of a seminar essay though with varying degrees of success. The essay answers the question. The thesis is clearly stated but may not address all aspects of the question. The supporting evidence advances the thesis. A viable counterargument and rebuttal are present. The organization has strong points, and the essay is clearly written.

B (84-86): An essay that is a satisfactory consideration of the topic and demonstrates acceptable graduate performance. The essay generally answers the question. The thesis is stated but may lack clarity and may not address all aspects of the question. The thesis is generally supported with relevant evidence. A counterargument and rebuttal are presented but likely not fully developed. Problems with organization and clarity may exist.

B- (80-83): The essay is slightly below the expected graduate-level performance. The essay may only partially answer the question. The thesis has at least one of the following weaknesses: it is vague, unclear, or fails to address the entire question. The evidence and analysis do not fully support the thesis. The counterargument and rebuttal are not fully developed. The essay may have distracting organizational flaws or significant problems with clarity.

C+ (77-79): The essay is below acceptable graduate-level performance. The essay fails to address one or more of the five elements described above. The essay may not effectively answer the question. The thesis has at least two of the following weaknesses: it is vague, unclear, or fails to address the entire question. Evidence to support the thesis may be inadequate, and analysis may be incomplete. The treatment of the counterargument and rebuttal may be deficient. The organization may be poor, making the other four elements of an effective essay difficult to identify.

C (74-76): The essay generally fails to meet the standards of graduate work. While it might express an opinion, it fails to adequately answer the question, develop a thesis appropriate to the question, make adequate use of evidence, include a counterargument and rebuttal purposeful to the overall argument. The essay does not have a coherent structure or demonstrate the quality of insight deemed sufficient to explore the assigned question adequately.

C- (70-73): The essay fails to meet the standards of graduate-level work. The essay reflects a failure to understand or answer the question. The thesis is poorly stated, with minimal evidence or support, or the essay may lack a counterargument and/or a rebuttal. The essay may express an opinion more than it provides a critically argued response to the question. Flaws in construction and development further detract from the readability of the essay.

D (60-69): Essay lacks evidence of graduate-level understanding and critical thinking. The essay fails to address the assigned question or present a coherent thesis. It lacks effort expected or understanding of the subject matter. It may not consider a counterargument or rebuttal. The organization is critically unclear.

F (0–59): Conspicuously fails to meet graduate-level standards in every area. The essay does not address the question. The essay has no thesis and suffers from significant flaws in respect to structure, grammar, and logic. The essay lacks a counterargument and rebuttal. The essay displays an apparent lack of effort to achieve the course requirements. Gross errors in construction and development detract from the readability of the essay, or it may display evidence of plagiarism or misrepresentation.

Late Work: Unexcused tardy student work—that is, work turned in past the deadline without previous permission from the moderators—will receive a grade no greater than C+ (78). Student work that is not completed will receive a numeric grade of zero. Please see the U.S. Naval War College *Faculty Handbook* for further information on grading.

Essay Length and Format. Written assignments (both case study essays and the comprehensive essay) have specific length and formatting requirements. Failure to meet these requirements may result in a grade reduction.

9. Pretutorials and Tutorials.
For each assigned essay question, students will meet at least twice with their moderators. The first meeting will be a pretutorial to ensure that the student understands the question. A formal tutorial session follows where the moderators and student scrutinize the student's assigned question and the student's response. Moderators may require additional meetings.

10. Faculty Office Hours. Each faculty teaching team in the Strategy and Policy Department will schedule a weekly office hour either virtually or in-person**.** Faculty will also meet for

scheduled tutorials for writing assignments with each student and by appointment either virtually or in-person as requested.

11. Seminar Preparation and Contribution. Student contribution to seminar discussions is an essential part of this course. This begins with preparation that requires significant time to read and think. Preparation should also include the consideration of lesson plans provided by seminar moderators and even assignments such as discussion boards. Such preparation creates conditions where each member of the seminar is better able to contribute to seminar discussion. Only then, can the seminar group fully understand the strategic problems examined by the case study, apply the course themes to the material, and thus fulfill the course's objectives.

The seminar contribution grade does not measure the number of times a student speaks, but how well the student understands the material, enriches discussion, and contributes to fellow students' learning. In other words, the grade reflects the quality—not quantity—of class contributions. To take part in discussion, students must absorb the reading, listen attentively to lectures, and think critically about what they read and hear. The seminar is a team effort. Declining to contribute or saying very little undercuts the learning experience for everyone in the seminar, whereas advance preparation enhances the seminar's quality. Seminar contribution helps students demonstrate that they comprehend and can synthesize the course material and communicate their thoughts with clarity and precision.

Seminar preparation and contribution will be graded at the end of the term according to the following standards:

> **A+ (97-100):** Demonstrates exceptional preparation for each session as reflected in the quality of contributions to discussions. Contributions indicate brilliance through an original understanding of material throughout the course. Student contributions demonstrate clear, original, and critical thinking. Exceptional ability to listen and analyze the comments of others is evident through insightful quality and appropriate frequency of contribution.
>
> **A (94-96):** Arrives well-prepared for every seminar. Contribution is always of superior quality. Contributions are highlighted by insightful thought and understanding and contain some original interpretations of complex concepts. Student contributions demonstrate clear and critical thinking. Strikes an outstanding balance between "listening" and "contributing."
>
> **A- (90-93):** Above the average expected of a graduate student. Prepared for and fully engaged in seminar discussions and commands the respect of colleagues. Student contributions demonstrate critical thinking. Consistently displays attentive listening skills and thinks through the issues at hand before commenting.
>
> **B+ (87-89):** Average graduate-level preparation and contribution. Preparation and contribution reflect an understanding of the material. Sometimes contributes original and well-developed insights. A positive contributor to seminar who thoughtfully joins in most

discussions as an active listener and engaged speaker. Many of the student contributions demonstrate critical thinking.

B (84-86): Satisfactory contribution. Involvement in seminar reflects adequate preparation with the occasional contribution of original and insightful thought. Some of the student's contributions demonstrate critical thinking. May not always consider others' contributions when speaking or may not always demonstrate active listening.

B- (80-83): Only demonstrates minimally acceptable graduate-level contribution. Comes to seminar prepared for only portions of the seminar discussion. Contributes, but sometimes speaks or responds without having thought through the issue well enough to present a structurally sound position. Minimally acceptable consideration of others' contributions when speaking and minimally acceptable active listening.

C+ (77-79): Below acceptable level of contribution. Does not demonstrate preparation for seminar. Sometimes contributes voluntarily, though more frequently needs to be encouraged to participate in discussions.

C (74-76): Contribution is marginal. Occasionally attempts to put forward a plausible opinion, but the inadequate use of evidence, incoherent logic structure, and critically unclear quality of insight demonstrate a lack of preparation. Frequently seems disconnected or disengaged from the conversation.
C- (70-73): Lack of contribution to seminar discussions reflects clear substandard preparation for sessions. Unable to articulate a responsible opinion. Sometimes displays a negative attitude.

D (60-69): Is not prepared or engaged. Contributions are infrequent and reflect below minimum acceptable understanding of course material. Engages in frequent fact-free conversation.

F (0-59): Completely unprepared for seminar. Fails to demonstrate acceptable preparation and fails to contribute in any substantive manner. May be extremely disruptive or uncooperative.

12. Grade Appeals. After discussing feedback and the grade on an assignment with his or her seminar moderator, a student may request a grade review by submitting a written justification for the review to the Department Executive Assistant no later than one week after the grade has been received. The Executive Assistant will then appoint two faculty members other than the original graders to conduct an independent review. Anonymity will be maintained throughout the second team of graders will not know the student's identity, the seminar from which the essay came, or the grade originally assigned. They will grade the paper independently as though it had been submitted for the first time, providing full comments, criticisms, and a new grade. The new grade will replace the old one. The student may request an additional review of the work in question no later than one week after the new grade has been received, whereupon the Department Chair will review the appeal and either affirm the grade assigned on appeal or assign another grade (higher

or lower), which then replaces any previous grade assigned. In exceptional circumstances the student may, within one week of receiving the results of the appeal from the Department Chair, make a further appeal to the Dean of Academics, whose decision in the matter will be final.

13. Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation of work will not be tolerated at the Naval War College. The Naval War College enforces a strict academic code requiring authors to properly cite materials they have consulted for written work submitted in fulfillment of diploma/degree requirements. Simply put plagiarism is prohibited. Likewise, this academic code (defined in the U.S. Naval War College *Faculty Handbook*) prohibits cheating, as well as presenting work previously completed elsewhere as new work. Plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation are inconsistent with the professional standards required of all military personnel and government employees. Furthermore, in the case of U.S. military officers, such conduct clearly violates the "Exemplary Conduct Standards" delineated in Title 10, U.S. Code, Sections 3583 (U.S. Army), 5947 (U.S. Naval Service), and 8583 (U.S. Air Force).

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without giving proper credit to the author or creator of the work. It is passing off another's words, ideas, analysis, or other products as one's own. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be treated as such by the College. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

a. Verbatim use of others' words without both quotation marks (or block quotation) and citation.

b. Paraphrasing of others' words or ideas without citation.

c. Any use of others' work (other than facts that are widely accepted as common knowledge) found in books, journals, newspapers, websites, interviews, government documents, course materials, lecture notes, films, and so forth without giving credit.

d. The verbatim use of others' words without both quotation marks (or block quotation) and citation

Authors are expected to give full credit in their written submissions when using another's words or ideas. While extensive quoting or paraphrasing of others' work with proper attribution is not prohibited by this code, a substantially borrowed but properly cited paper may lack the originality expected of graduate-level work. Submission of such a paper may merit a low or failing grade but is not plagiarism.

Cheating is defined as giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid in support of one's own efforts or the efforts of another student. (Note: NWC reference librarians, Strategy and Policy Department faculty as well as those from the Writing Center are authorized sources of aid in the preparation of class assignments, but not exams.) Cheating includes but is not limited to the following actions:

a. Gaining unauthorized access to exams.

b. Assisting or receiving assistance from other students or other individuals in the preparation of written assignments or during tests (unless specifically permitted).

c. Using unauthorized materials (notes, texts, crib sheets, and the like, in paper or electronic form) during tests.

Misrepresentation is defined as using a single paper for more than one purpose without permission or acknowledgement. Misrepresentation includes but is not limited to the following actions:

a. Submitting a single paper or substantially the same paper for more than one course at NWC without permission from the instructors.

b. Submitting a paper or substantially the same paper previously prepared for some other purpose outside NWC without acknowledging that it is an earlier work.

14. S&P Policy on the Use of Super Intelligence and Large Language Models: Using Large Language Models (LLMs) and Super Intelligence (SI) offers many new capabilities and tools when used responsibly. Using it improperly can lead to plagiarism, cheating, or misrepresentation. This section outlines appropriate and inappropriate uses for the Strategy and Policy Course.
All use of LLMs or SI in this course must follow two core principles:

- **Support Learning:** Tools must help you build critical thinking and professional communication skills, not replace them.
- **Original Work**: You are fully responsible for your own ideas in all writing assignments and seminar discussions.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses
You may use SI and LLMs to support your reading and writing processes in consultation with your professors about their expectations.

- **Generally Acceptable Uses:**
  - As guides to, but not replacements for, completing readings
  - Checking spelling and grammar
  - Formatting citations
  - Navigating complex concepts, theories, and definitions
  - Brainstorming topics, mapping ideas, and critiquing arguments
- **Generally Unacceptable Uses:**
  - Submitting verbatim, SI-generated text as your own work
  - Failing to provide attribution for SI's role in your writing
  - Using SI to make your authorial voice mimic another scholar's

These examples are not exhaustive. Your course chair and seminar moderators will provide additional guidance during the first week of class. If you are unsure whether a specific use is permitted, ask your moderator before submitting your work.

Citation and Documentation Requirements

S&P Department Guidelines for Citation and Disclosure of Use of SI and LLMs
When a student uses SI and LLMs for general assistance, a disclosure statement is required. The following formatted statement can be placed on the student's essay cover page (a generic S&P Student Essay Cover Page can be found on Blackboard).

- "During the preparation of this work, the author used [TOOL NAME/VERSION] in order to [PROVIDE SPECIFIC PURPOSE(S), e.g., improve the readability and language of the manuscript]. After using this service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for its content".

In addition to the disclosure statement, students are required to cite specific content or ideas generated by SI and LLMs. However, it bears repeating that students shall not consult sources outside of those listed in this syllabus. Even with this restriction, there are instances where it might still prove necessary to cite content or ideas generated by SI and LLMs. If this is the case, the following is the proper format:

- NAME OF THE TOOL response to "THE PROMPT USED," THE COMPANY THAT DEVELOPED THE TOOL, DATE THE INFORMATION BEING CITED WAS GENERATED.

For further information regarding the proper citation and attribution of use of SI and LLMs, consult the Chicago Manual of Style Online.

15. Student Survey. Student feedback is vital to the future development of the Strategy and Policy Course. Responses are treated anonymously and are used only to create standardized reports. The survey is designed to provide lecture feedback on a weekly basis and overall feedback at the end of the course.

Lecture surveys do not require a password, but for the course survey student seminar leaders will distribute randomly generated passwords to each student. Use this password for the end of the course survey and please do not share it with others. Thank you in advance for your time and effort in completing this important assessment of the Strategy and Policy Course.

16. Online Resources. Blackboard is the main repository of online resources for the Strategy and Policy Course. On Blackboard, students can access the most current versions of the syllabus, course calendar, lecture schedule, and selected readings. Moreover, lecture handouts and video links will be posted on Blackboard along with other supplemental information, including material specific to individual seminars.

Readings identified as "Selected Readings" or "Leganto" are available electronically through Blackboard. The best way to access such readings is to log into Blackboard for your seminar, select the "Case Studies" tab, and then the relevant case. The words "Selected Readings" serve as a hyperlink to take you to the PDF of the correct reading. The word "Leganto" also serves as a hyperlink to take you to the library electronic reserve reading list. The

words “E-book/Leganto” will provide you with access to the entire electronic version of the book, however only the pages listed in the syllabus are required for reading.

Please refer any questions to Lori Cassisi (Academic Coordinator, Strategy and Policy Department), lori.cassisi@usnwc.edu; (401) 856-5364; Strategy and Policy Department, Office H-333.

I. THEORIES OF WAR, STRATEGY, AND GREAT POWER COMPETITIONS

General: One of the main goals of Professional Military Education is to develop "strategically minded joint warfighters who think critically."[3] Those seeking to hone their critical thinking skills can do so either through first-hand experience or study. For the military professional, first-hand experience can be a bloody process of real-world trial and error. The Strategy and Policy Course uses case studies to impart critical habits of thought in the classroom, where learning does not have such potentially catastrophic results. Though each case is unique, the sequence of cases is designed toward a cumulative outcome through the integration of theorists, course themes, strategic frameworks for analysis, and historical examples. The first case provides foundational concepts of the course, defines terminology so that students can communicate effectively, and, more importantly, it exposes students to several key course theorists.

Carl von Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Sir Basil Liddell Hart and Alfred Thayer Mahan provide a theoretical and analytical foundation for the Strategy and Policy course. In future case studies, students will encounter additional theorists, including Julian S. Corbett, Thucydides, and Mao Zedong. To fully utilize these thinkers, it is important to grasp the value of theoretical writing. These sometimes complementary, sometimes-conflicting works do not provide standardized answers. Instead, theorists impart common frames of reference and useful concepts for civilian and military leaders to utilize when integrating instruments of national power in the pursuit of political ends. They spark thought, stimulate debate, and promote creativity. Theory does not provide a one-size-fits-all answer; rather, theory contributes to the development of sound strategy. These theorists offer a point of departure from which we can think critically about the subsequent case studies and course themes.

First, the theorists provide methods for thinking through difficult problems. Book 2 of Clausewitz's *On War* is particularly suggestive. In these pages, Clausewitz investigates the purpose of theory and introduces the concept of critical analysis to war. Rather than prescribing rigid rules, these theorists offer frameworks to guide judgment. Students should, however, understand that these methods of thinking can be applied to issues beyond the use of force and can assist with problem-solving in nearly every aspect of life. After all, Clausewitz's critical analysis entails "the application of theoretical truths to actual events." It requires "not just an evaluation of the means actually employed, but of *all possible means*."[4]

Second, every theorist in the Strategy and Policy Course contends that war must serve a rational political purpose. This is not mere coincidence: the theorists span several millennia and represent different cultures, societies, and political systems. Strategy involves linking the ways to attain an end with the available means, in a competitive environment where adversaries react and respond. One cannot understand strategy without an appreciation of all three factors.

[1] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy," CJCSI 1800.01G, 15 April 2024.

[2] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 156, 161.

Third, the theorists present an expansive array of concepts. Their ideas and frameworks provide tools for analysis and ways to expand the student's mental aperture. Though the theorists presented in the course wrote many years ago, their concepts remain relevant today. Sun Tzu's injunction to know the enemy and know oneself parallels Clausewitz's recommendations on pre-war planning and lives on in our contemporary concept of "net assessment." Moreover, Sun Tzu's emphasis on advantageous positioning, superior speed, and surprise foreshadows many aspects of what is now called "maneuver warfare." Likewise, Clausewitz's maxim of concentrating forces against the enemy's "center of gravity" still lies at the heart of U.S. joint military doctrine and planning processes. Liddell Hart's concern with war termination and a better state of peace reflects personal experience of two 20th century world wars, but also a deep understanding of historical competitions between great powers.

The Naval War College's own Alfred Thayer Mahan adds an additional layer, focusing on the role of navies, trade, and maritime commerce in building the capacities of states during both peace and war. His theories range from the level of grand strategy to that of naval tactics. His grand strategic analysis explored the interrelationship of naval power, geography, social structure, economic organization, and governmental institutions. In the process, he developed the concept of sea power—a combination of naval might and financial and economic strength, which needed to be considered not only in times of war but also in times of peace. He argued that creating and sustaining sea power requires favorable geographic, economic, social, and political conditions. When addressing naval strategy, operations, and tactics, Mahan emphasized the aggressive employment of the fleet. Central to Mahan's theory is a critical operational decision with enormous strategic importance: under what circumstances does it make strategic sense to risk one's fleet? This necessitates exploring the ways sea power can influence a war's outcome. Specifically, Mahan believed sea power could have a decisive effect on the outcome of war.

Finally, each theorist describes an overarching way of war grounded in the context of the theorist's time. Each wrote for a specific type of belligerent with definite instruments of power, and in a certain strategic environment. Clausewitz served Prussia, a continental power on the European mainland. The state's primary instrument of national power was its army. His writings grapple with changes in warfare that occurred during the Napoleonic Wars. Sun Tzu's writings reflect the instruments of power and conditions specific to the warring states of ancient China. Mahan examines emerging trends in naval technology and commerce, relying on a careful study of sea power in the age of sail. Liddell Hart re-examines scholarship on strategy in the aftermath of two cataclysmic wars that ended several centuries of European dominance in global affairs. Though the insights of the theorists have relevance beyond warfare of their specific era and their type of state, students of strategy should keep in mind the context in which each theorist wrote. It allows us to better conceptualize the strengths and limitations of their theories. Moreover, this helps us to understand some of the principal critiques levied against their writings.

Theoretical work does not provide definitive answers to strategic problems. Rather than answers, theory provides principles and concepts to consider when seeking solutions to complex problems. In that pursuit, we must not twist and distort the theorists into things they are not. Each theorist provides specific tools, and as students of strategy, we must seek the proper tool.

Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Liddell Hart offer complementary theories. Clausewitz provides a critical point of departure by clearly describing war as "*nothing but the continuation of policy with other means*."[5] As the title of his book suggests, he writes extensively on war. In some respects, his focus is the narrowest of all the theorists in the course, yet he provides a definition and description of war in its various parts. Unlike Clausewitz, who developed complex and reasoned arguments, Sun Tzu addresses strategy in concise, yet profound statements. His writings tend to stretch beyond the actual fighting. He emphasizes winning without fighting and his menu of options addresses the value of attacking an opponent's strategy, and alliances, supporting his argument that victory is possible without bloodshed. Liddell Hart extrapolated from Clausewitz and Sun Tzu to posit a theory of "grand strategy"—an "all instruments of power" approach for nations and coalitions to assure positive political outcomes in peace and war.

Mahan discusses the role of the sea power in providing or supporting these other instruments – diplomatic influence in peace and war, economic prosperity as an underpinning of state power – as well as the role of navies in wartime. Geography plays an important role in shaping strategy and policy, and access to and exploitation of the sea provides benefits in both peace and war. This is important when addressing long-term competition between great powers. These competitions require analysis of the interplay of strategic concepts and policy instruments, as well as careful strategic thinking in both war and peace.

In keeping with the cumulative nature of the course, this case provides critical frameworks for evaluating complex problems of strategy and policy that will be presented in the subsequent historical case studies. Rather than answers, this case study leaves us with questions and frameworks that allow students of strategy to fulfill the current military leadership's expectation for "the development of strategically minded joint warfighters who think critically and can creatively apply military power to inform national strategy, conduct globally integrated operations, and fight under conditions of disruptive change."[6]

Essay and Discussion Questions

1. What does Clausewitz conceive to be the value of theory for strategic leaders in the profession of arms?

2. What does Clausewitz mean by critical analysis? How can this concept aid those in the profession of arms as well as national security professionals when making strategy and policy decisions?

3. Clausewitz emphasizes the need to understand the importance of three interrelated aspects of war: reason, passion, and the play of chance and creativity. How do the three concepts interact as part of a trinity? What value does the trinity have for a student of strategy who is

[3] Clausewitz, *On War*, Note of July 10, 1827, p. 69.

[4] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy," CJCSI 1800.01G, 15 April 2024.

attempting to understand individual wars, and does the trinity's value change when approaching long-term competitions?

4. Clausewitz, on page 69 of *On War*, recognizes two kinds of war, involving limited or unlimited objectives. How do they differ from each other?

5. In Book 1, Chapter 1 of *On War*, Clausewitz makes a distinction between war in theory—which tends to escalate until all available forces are used—and war in reality. How do the two types of war differ from each other? Why are most wars waged with less than total effort?

6. Some have suggested that technological advances may soon lift the "fog of war" completely, thus invalidating certain of Clausewitz's most important insights. Do you agree?

7. How does Clausewitz's view of the proper relationship between war and politics compare to the views offered by Sun Tzu?

8. What factors do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu tell the reader to assess when trying to better understand friends, enemies, neutrals, and even oneself?

9. The authors of *The Art of War* and *On War* agree: though war can be studied systematically, strategic leadership is an art, not a science. What are the implications of this proposition for the study of strategy and policy?

10. How do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu define war? In what ways do their respective definitions impact their theories?

11. *The Art of War* says that "to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill," while Clausewitz states that very limited and defensive objectives might be secured by the mere deployment of force. Are these two statements contradictory or complementary?

12. Evaluate the role of intelligence in *The Art of War* and *On War*. Which view is more relevant today?

13. What does Mahan mean by "sea power"? How can countries possessing sea power influence the international environment?

14 What are Mahan's six elements of sea power? How were these elements relevant at the time of his writing and how are they relevant today?

15. What is "grand strategy?" How useful are Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Mahan for thinking about grand strategy? Does Liddell Hart's definition reflect the thinking of either Clausewitz, Sun Tzu or Mahan?

16. On page 131, Clausewitz states "we clearly see that the activities characteristic of war may be split into two main categories: those that are merely preparation for war, and war

proper." Does this mean that strategic principles cannot be applied to peacetime? Would Sun Tzu and/or Mahan agree?

17. Sun Tzu argued that attacking an enemy's strategy and disrupting an enemy's alliances are the two preferred means of winning conflicts. How can these concepts be applied at the grand strategic level?

18. How do Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Mahan believe that nations win wars?

19. Liddell Hart considered "the object in war is to attain a better peace." What did Hart consider to be a better state of peace? Would Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Mahan agree?

20. Clausewitz emphasizes the primacy of politics in waging war. How does Clausewitz's view of the proper relationships between war and politics and between military and political leaders compare with that of Sun Tzu? (See in particular Book 1, Chapter 1 and Book 8, Chapters 6A-6B of On War along with Chapter III of The Art of War.)

21. What roles and responsibilities do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu assign to military and political leaders in strategic decision-making?

22. What challenges are inherent when employing theoretical principles to aid in the understanding of historical cases? Do the challenges change when using principles to consider current and future decision-making environments?

23. Of the theorists presented in this which case study provides the most valuable insights for understanding long-term competitions, and why?

24. How can we use Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mahan, and Liddell Hart to help us make sense of the contemporary security environment?

Readings:

1. Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. **BOOK**

Please note, *On War* is divided into eight books, each of the eight books is subdivided into chapters. The following are the assigned readings:

- The Front Matter to *On War*: Preface by Marie von Clausewitz and Two Notes by the Author (pages 65-71).
- Book One: All Chapters. (pp. 75-123)
- Book Two: Chapters 1-3 and 5-6. (pp. 127-150, 156-174)
- Book Three: Chapters 1-8, 16. (pp. 177-197, 216-219)
- Book Four: Chapter 11. (pp. 258-262)
- Book Six: Chapters 1, 5, 6, 26, and 27. (pp. 357-359, 370-376, 479-487)

- Book Seven: Chapters 2, 4, 5, and 22. (pp. 524-525, 527-528, 566-573)
- Book Eight: All Chapters. (pp. 577-633)

[This translation of *On War*, by historians Howard and Paret with commentary by strategic analyst Bernard Brodie, was much heralded when it appeared in 1976, in the immediate aftermath of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. It remains the most widely read English-language version of Clausewitz's work.]

2. Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Samuel B. Griffith, trans. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. Pages 57-149. **BOOK**

[Griffith's experience in the United States Marine Corps, as well as his deep knowledge of Asian languages and cultures, makes his translation of Sun Tzu both scholarly and approachable for the professional military officer.]

3. Liddell Hart, Sir B. H. *Strategy*. New York: Meridian, second revised edition, 1991. Pages 319-323, 353-360. **(Leganto)**

[Liddell Hart, one of the most prolific and important British writers on strategic affairs in the twentieth century, introduces the concept of "grand strategy." This passage also supplies an important definition of "victory," and thoughts on the transitory nature of war termination.]

4. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *Mahan on Naval Strategy Selections from the Writings of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan*, John B. Hattendorf, ed. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991. Pages 27-96. **BOOK**

[This reading introduces some of the major themes in Mahan's writings: sea power, maritime strategy, and geopolitics exerted a major influence on statesmen and naval planners in the era of the First World War. This reading examines Mahan's six elements of sea power and links them to principles of naval strategy.]

5. Maurer, John H. "Alfred Thayer Mahan and the Strategy of Sea Power" in the *New Makers of Modern Strategy*, Hal Brands ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. Pages 169-192. **BOOK**

[Maurer, a Naval War College Distinguished University Professor, examines Mahan on sea power, maritime strategy, naval warfare, and great power competitions.]

II. THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: PEACE, WAR, AND DETERRENCE IN A LONG-TERM COMPETITION

General: Our first historical case study involves a war that may be unfamiliar to many students. Thucydides, however, meant for his account of the decades-long conflict between a rising Athenian empire and the traditional hegemon, Sparta, to be "a possession for all time." He succeeded. American political and military leaders from John Adams to George C. Marshall considered its lessons applicable to the security challenges of their own day. In this case study, our lens has been widened to include not only the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.) that Thucydides wrote about, but also the long-term competition in which that war occurred.

The struggle of Athens and Sparta for hegemony lasted 75 years—from the initial defeat of the invading Persians by an Athenian-Spartan alliance in 479 B.C. to the final defeat of Athens by a Persian-Spartan alliance in 404 B.C. Vibrant Athens was on the rise for the first 50 years of this case study, prompting two wars with Sparta and its allies in the Peloponnesian League. These two former allies interacted along a continuum of competition from economic sanctions to outright conflict. Looming offshore was Persia, an ancient "superpower" that played the city-states of Greece against one another.

After the Athenian-Spartan alliance beat back the Persian invasion in 479 B.C., both city-states could have taken an equal share of the spoils. Sparta, however, withdrew and retrenched while Athens assumed leadership of the Delian League. Originally a confederation of maritime states created as an anti-Persian alliance, the Delian League slowly transformed into the Athenian empire, and Athenian wealth and power—especially maritime power—grew impressively. Sparta increasingly began to fear this growth and considered invasion to stop it.

A defection from Sparta's alliance system in 460 B.C. triggered war between Athens and Sparta. Sparta and its allies tried to check growing Athenian power. Athens faced revolts within its empire, dispatched a doomed overseas expedition, was threatened by Spartan invasion, and was weakened by Persian intrigues. The war ended indecisively in 446 B.C. with a thirty-year treaty meant to prevent the same causes from triggering another war.

However, a stable peace proved elusive. Continued Athenian expansion unsettled Sparta and its allies. Several local crises gave Sparta the pretext to declare war in 431 B.C. despite the objections of its king, Archidamus. For the first seven years of the war, both alliances relied on their strengths. Athens used its maritime power to protect its lines of communications and launch small amphibious raids, while Sparta invaded the Athenian homeland annually. Neither side was able to terminate the war, however, and both found more success with modified strategies. Athens applied sea power more aggressively and secured what became a major victory by capturing a group of Sparta's elite citizen-soldiers. Unable to pursue its traditional strategy for fear of endangering its captured citizens, Sparta targeted Athenian allies and lines of communication, capturing a key source of Athens' naval stores. An inconclusive battle and the deaths of both field commanders empowered the peace parties in each city state in 421 B.C.

The resulting Peace of Nicias, named for the Athenian leader who brokered it, was supposed to last fifty years. But neither side completely fulfilled the treaty's obligations, and

soon Athens was intriguing against Sparta while Sparta's allies were encouraging it to resume the war. Athens failed to win a decisive land battle against Sparta in 418 B.C. and saw its dreams of an expanded empire crushed by the failure of the Sicilian Campaign in 413 B.C. After this defeat, Persia finally chose sides. Persian ships and money allowed Sparta to rapidly integrate sea power on an unprecedented scale. By the end of the war, Athens was again dealing with repeated allied revolts, the loss of a large expeditionary force in Sicily, a permanent Spartan garrison near Athens, and the active involvement of Persia on the side of Sparta. The destruction of Athens' remaining naval forces in 405 B.C. led its leaders to sue for peace the following year.

The Peloponnesian War is especially rich for illustrating many of the concepts presented in the Strategy and Policy course. This case allows students to consider the interrelationship between war termination, winning the peace and preparing for war, and the decision for war. Of the three major conflicts in this case study, only the Persian Wars ended without a formal, negotiated settlement. During the Peloponnesian War from 431-404 B.C., both Athens and Sparta rejected multiple peace offers from the other side, and neither fully complied with the terms of the Peace of Nicias. It is worth examining whether these failed because one side demanded too much (or perhaps too little) politically or did not go far enough militarily.

The Greek city-states were never able to transform their military victories into permanent peace agreements. In some cases, the underlying reasons for the conflict remained unresolved, preventing a more lasting peace from taking hold. The treaty agreed to at the end of the first Athenian-Spartan conflict in 446 B.C. was specifically structured to prevent the tensions that led to war, but in 431 B.C. the Peloponnesian War began under remarkably similar circumstances.

These issues prompted Athens and Sparta to strengthen and realign their coalitions and continually prepare for the next war. As a result, each power deliberately chose to initiate, or reinitiate, hostilities. Thucydides presents several of these decisions—the beginning of the Second Peloponnesian War and the Athenian invasion of Sicily—as debates within one or more of the alliances. It is worth asking whether these decisions were based on new policy aims, unfulfilled policy aims from the previous war, or poor war termination and peace enforcement. Similarly, students should evaluate not only how well the victors "won" the peace, but how all sides prepared for the next war.

Thucydides is also one of the key theorists in this course. Although he did not originate the theory of coercion, and neither Athens nor Sparta thought of their strategies in terms of deterrence or compellence, analysts have found examples of these modern concepts in his history. After all, Athens and Sparta spent much of the war maneuvering around various treaties, and they often attempted to intimidate or cajole their allies and enemies through their speeches and actions. Both Athens and Sparta used military, diplomatic, economic, and information tools to support their efforts in war and peace. Students should consider whether coercion failures contributed to both Athenian and Spartan decisions for war or their inability to win the peace.

Thucydides is sometimes called the founder of realism or power politics, and students can trace the evolution of this concept as well as its implementation through Thucydides' speeches, many of which present both realism and its alternatives. Additionally, the motivations of honor, fear, and self-interest may serve as a sort of "Thucydidean trinity," much like

Clausewitz's trinity of passion, chance, and reason. Embedded within the text are key concepts that may offer frameworks to view later cases, such as net assessment, the policy-strategy match, and the difference between proximate and ultimate causes.

In addition, focusing on Thucydides' descriptions of the challenges faced by democratic Athens during the Peloponnesian War, provides possible lessons for the United States today. To what extent do modern democracies embody the characteristics of ancient Athens, and how much can we learn from the Athenian experience? If Clausewitz and Sun Tzu were right to suggest that self-knowledge is the foundation of any effective policy and strategy, then is Thucydides' account of the rise and fall of Athens a worthwhile starting point for understanding the problems modern democracies experience in long-term competitions?

Finally, this case introduces international relations (IR) theory. Building on the study of strategic theorists like Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mao, Corbett, and Mahan, IR theory expands the strategist's toolkit by introducing additional concepts and theoretical lenses to explain the behavior of states and international actors. This framework helps students organize complex information, isolate the factors with the greatest explanatory power, and better understand the dynamics of competition, conflict, and cooperation. Students will explore key concepts alongside the major theoretical perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Ultimately, students will apply these theories to their analysis of the Peloponnesian War, as well as all subsequent historical and contemporary cases in the course.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. How would you characterize the relationship between Athens and Sparta at the end of the Persian Wars (479 B.C.)? Did this relationship change between 479-431 B.C.? If so, why?

2. What factors contributed to the outbreak of both the Athenian-Spartan conflict of 460-446 B.C. and the Peloponnesian War from 431-404 B.C.? Why were these factors important?

3. Did Athenian and/or Spartan allies drag them into a war that neither power wanted?

4. Why was Sparta not deterred from going to war with Athens?

5. In 431 B.C., Athens had the most capable and largest navy in the Greek world. Why did this advantage not lead to victory in the Peloponnesian War?

6. Which leader, Pericles or Archidamus, did a better job of net assessment and of comprehending the security environment prior to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War?

7. How well did the sea power, Athens, and the land power, Sparta, compensate for their weaknesses and exploit its strengths in fighting against each other?

8. Did the Peace of Nicias fail because the belligerents didn't go far enough militarily, because they demanded too much politically, or because they couldn't agree on peace enforcement?

9. What underlying problems did the Peace of Nicias fail to solve? Were there any alternatives short of renewed conflict that could have solved them?

10. Was Sparta's success due more to its superior strategy or to the self-defeating behavior of the Athenians?

11. Why did Athens and Sparta find it so difficult to successfully terminate this conflict?

12. Which was more important for Sparta's victory after the defeat of the Sicilian Expedition: its management of the campaign in Attica and the Aegean, or its integration of Sicilian and Persian allies?

13. How effective were different instruments of state power at achieving the policy objectives of Athens, Sparta, and Persia?

14. Which city-state struck the better balance between short-term military considerations and longer-term political considerations, Athens or Sparta?

15. "Persia derived the most benefit from the conflicts between the Greek city-states." Do you agree?

16. Are democracies more likely than other systems of government to commit the "blunders" Pericles was so concerned about and Thucydides highlighted? If so, why? If not, why not?

17. Basil Liddell Hart asserts that "the object in war is to attain a better peace—even if only from your point of view." Did any of the conflicts studied in this case achieve that objective?

18. Sun Tzu states that attacking the enemy's strategy and allies should take precedence over attacking either their army or their cities. How viable was this "menu" of options for Athens and Sparta in this case study?

19. "Thucydides is considered one of the founding fathers of the realist tradition in international relations theory. How are the principal tenets of realism illustrated by his history of the Peloponnesian War? How do liberalism and constructivism offer additional explanatory power?"

20. Past students have found Thucydides critical for making sense of their experiences in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. To what degree does Thucydides help you understand the current strategic challenges that confront the U.S.?

Readings:

1. Strassler, Robert B., ed. *The Landmark Thucydides*. New York: The Free Press, 1996. Books I-VIII, Pages 3-548. Books 1-8. **BOOK**

[Thucydides covers all eleven Strategy and Policy course themes in his account of this war, compelling his readers to think through the interrelationship of policy, strategy, and operations and the integration and application of naval power.]

Key passages:

Book I – The origins of the conflict, pages 3-85. With particular emphasis on the speeches, the Persian Wars and the Delian League, pages 49-54, and the Athenian-Spartan conflict from 460-446 B.C., pages 56-63.

Book II – Outbreak of the war, pages 89-107.
– Pericles' Funeral Oration, the plague in Athens, and the policy of Pericles, pages 110-128.

Book III – The revolt of Mytilene, pages 159-167.
– The Mytilenean debate, pages 175-184.
– The Plataean debate, pages 185-193.
– The Corcyrean civil war, pages 194-201.

Book IV – Athens' success at Pylos, pages 223-246.
– Brasidas in Thrace, pages 263-272.
– Brasidas captures Amphipolis, pages 279-285.

Book V – Peace of Nicias, pages 309-316.
– Alliance between Athens and Argos and the Battle of Mantinea, pages 327-350.
– The Melian Dialogue, pages 350-357.

Book VI – Launching of the Sicilian expedition, pages 361-379.

Book VII – Athenian disaster in Sicily, pages 427-478.

Book VIII – Reaction to Athenian defeat in Sicily, pages 481-483.
– Spartan treaties with Persia, pages 492, 501-502, and 514-515.
– Alcibiades advises Persia, pages 506-508.
– The Athenian coup, pages 508-512, 517-525, and 532-540.

2. Kagan, Donald. *The Peloponnesian War*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Pages 1-54. **(Leganto)**

[Kagan's account is helpful for understanding the events leading to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War as well as the geopolitical context and coalition dynamics of fifth century B.C. Greece.]

3. Roberts, Jennifer T. *The Plague of War: Athens, Sparta, and the Struggle for Ancient Greece.* London: Oxford, 2017. Pages 237-294. **BOOK**

[This selection from Roberts picks up the narrative of the war where Thucydides leaves off and carries through the Ionian War, including the crucial naval battles of Arginusae and Aegospotami, ending with the deposition of democracy in Athens.]

4. Lebow, Richard Ned. "Thucydides and Deterrence." *Security Studies*, 16 (2007). Pages 163-188. **(Leganto)**

[This article by former Strategy and Policy visiting professor Ned Lebow examines deterrence and compellence failures as possible explanations for the origins and course of the Peloponnesian War.]

5. Ulrich, Marybeth. "An International Relations Primer for Strategy and Policy." (**Selected Readings**)

[This reading by the Chair of the Strategy and Policy Department offers a primer on modern international relations (IR) theories that the students may find useful to understand Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War and in subsequent case studies.]

III. THE WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON: MARITIME VERSUS CONTINENTAL SECURITY STRATEGIES

General: Between 1793 and 1815, Britain and France struggled for hegemony over Europe and dueled for supremacy over the world's oceans. Britain, as a maritime power in possession of a dominant navy, sought unrivalled command of the seas. France, with its own maritime interests, clashed repeatedly with Britain. With a powerful army, France under Napoleon sought to impose its imperium on Europe. Although Britain possessed a smaller army, British leaders consistently opposed French plans on the continent. The challenges faced by continental and maritime powers in overcoming their asymmetric deficiencies and applying their strengths contributed to the protracted nature of the wars considered in this case study. Unlike the Peloponnesian War, in which the maritime power Athens lost command of the sea and suffered defeat, in the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon the maritime power Britain maintained its command of the sea and in combination with the continental powers Austria, Prussia, and Russia eventually defeated Napoleonic France.

The wars examined in this case study—The Wars of the French Revolution (1792-1802) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815)—were the final pair of conflicts in a longstanding great power competition between Britain and France. These wars were in part precipitated by the destabilizing influence of the French Revolution. Britain remained throughout the stalwart opponent of Revolutionary France and French imperial designs under Napoleon. In the opening stages of the conflict, William Pitt the Younger guided British policy and strategy. His successors would follow his basic strategy of maximizing Britain's naval power, along with Britain's strengths in finance, industry, and commerce, while minimizing its weakness on land by supporting anti-French coalitions.

The Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon offer a valuable opportunity for enhancing student understanding of a broad range of important S&P course concepts and themes to include: the instruments of national power, the interrelationship of policy, strategy, and operations, and the international dimension of strategy. The case study also emphasizes other broad concepts. One concept is the fundamental difference between what is necessary to compel an adversary to sue for peace and what is required to make peace durable. The protracted nature of the wars in this case allows students to contrast operational with strategic success and underscores the interplay of civil and military leadership in successful war termination. Napoleon is often ranked among the greatest military commanders in the history of warfare, despite losing his empire and dying in exile. As Napoleon rose to prominence in the 1790s, he increasingly blurred the lines between military and political leadership by becoming First Consul through a coup d'état in 1799. In 1804, he took the additional step of becoming Emperor of the French. As emperor, he won stunning battlefield victories, including Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland. Napoleon was not only a successful commander but also the head of state, wielding the political power to terminate individual wars. A stable peace, however, eluded him. Why did Napoleon, one of the greatest battlefield commanders in history, suffer defeat and forced abdication? And how did Britain, along with Napoleon's other opponents, achieve lasting peace?

Another topic in policy and strategy highlighted in this case is the influence of political culture on strategy. The French Revolution transformed politics and consequently the conduct of

wars. The French Revolution altered the relationship between the government and the people and transformed the organization and development of the military. The military was no longer composed of long-service volunteers and foreign mercenaries, but of citizen soldiers. Command was no longer the exclusive preserve of those of noble family lineages but open to all who demonstrated talent. Ideas of liberty, equality, and nationalism created powerful motivations that turned the population from subjects of a king into citizens of a nation. Revolutionaries harnessed these motivations through the *levée en masse*, organizing France for warfare on a scale previously unknown. This created a nation in arms with the entire state focused on waging a new way of war that encouraged boldness.

This case study introduces the sea power theories of Sir Julian Corbett and re-emphasizes the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan. These major theorists on strategy examine the challenge of winning naval mastery and understanding the strategic effects derived from commanding the maritime commons. Sir Julian Corbett drew heavily upon Clausewitz's *On War* to develop a distinctive analysis of how maritime powers fight and win wars. At sea, Corbett believed the key objective from which all other effects flowed was the need to obtain "command of the sea." Corbett used Britain's experience in the Napoleonic Wars to show the strategic impact that a maritime power can have in influencing the outcomes of wars on land. Although the British army was not as strong as those of the other European great powers, the mobility provided by the Royal Navy allowed the army to exert influence on the war's outcome. Britain's joint capabilities allowed for opening and closing secondary theaters. After several false starts, Britain conducted a textbook example of joint and combined strategy in the Iberian Peninsula under the Duke of Wellington's leadership. The British campaigns in Spain and Portugal provided Corbett with an ideal case study to illustrate his strategic theories.

Alfred Thayer Mahan is famous for his examination of sea power. Mahan served as a professor and second president of the Naval War College. The excerpt from *The Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812* illustrates key aspects of Mahan's strategic theories. Mahan developed the concept of sea power, which is a grand strategy that emphasizes the interrelationship of naval power, geopolitics, society, the economy, and governmental institutions. When addressing naval strategy, operations, and tactics, Mahan emphasized the aggressive employment of the fleet. He argued that Admiral Horatio Nelson, Britain's famous naval leader, was the true embodiment of sea power largely because of his unerring quest for battle and the effects Britain obtained from his victories. This case study allows students to analyze under what circumstances it makes strategic sense for continental and maritime powers to risk their respective fleets. This necessitates exploring the ways naval power can influence a war's outcome. Can this influence be decisive? For example, the Battle of Trafalgar, fought on October 21, 1805, has mythic status, but what strategic advantages did Britain derive from Trafalgar that it did not already possess?

The prolonged period of warfare covered in this case allows for an examination of the strategic effects of economic and financial instruments of national power, coalition warfare, and the challenge of making a durable peace. Napoleon's Continental System sought to monopolize continental trade for the benefit of France while severing Britain's economic ties with the European continent. Britain employed its own instruments of economic warfare in retaliation against the Continental System. These attempts by Britain and France to damage their

opponent's economy resulted in an escalation of the war, as their objectives expanded, and economic warfare drew additional states into the conflict. Although Britain played a prominent role in the coalitions against France, the other European great powers provided most of the land forces. Only in 1813 did a final coalition form that proved capable of defeating Napoleon. A comparison of the success of the final coalition to the previous failures reveals both the prerequisites for coalition cohesion as well as high barriers to coalition unity. The statesmen who created the final coalition against Napoleonic France endeavored to transition from a wartime coalition to one capable of enforcing peace and providing long-term stability. Before the gates of Paris in 1814 and then at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, European political leaders planned a comprehensive postwar settlement to ensure stability through the satisfaction of essential national interests. The European great powers created a system of international order that produced a period of relative peace.

The Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon offer important lessons for political and military leaders today. Study of these wars will fulfill the PME goal of Program Learning Outcome 4: current doctrine rests upon theoretical foundations drawn from careful study of the history of these wars, including the theories of Clausewitz, Corbett, and Mahan. The sharp ideological divide created by the French Revolution, a division between proponents of the values of liberal democracy and those supporting traditional authoritarianism, continues to exist as illustrated by Vladimir Putin's recent war on Ukraine and the West more generally. Great power competition has revived and remains as dangerous to peace today as it was in the era of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon. The theories of Clausewitz, Mahan, and Corbett, derived from careful study of the lessons of the wars covered in this case, continue to inform current strategic thinking. Finally, an historical appreciation of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon can be of value to leaders today when navigating the treacherous waters of the current geopolitical environment.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Which mattered more as a cause of the Wars of the French Revolution (1792-1802): differences in ideology or the interests of great powers?

2. How well did Revolutionary France (1792-1802) exploit its strengths and compensate for its weaknesses in the wars against the coalitions arrayed against it?

3. What best explains the failure of the First and Second Coalitions to achieve their aims against Revolutionary France?

4. Just as the Peace of Nicias (421 B.C.) broke down almost immediately, the Peace of Amiens (1802) also ended in abrupt failure. What explains why these peace agreements failed?

5. In fighting Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, which factor was most important for Britain, its military and naval instruments of war or its economic power?

6. How well did Britain exploit its strengths and compensate for its weaknesses in its wars with France?

7. How strategically important were operations in secondary theaters for determining the outcome of the wars examined in this case?

8. Was the Battle of Trafalgar decisive?

9. Which was more important for Napoleon's defeat: his own self-defeating actions or the strategic performance of his adversaries?

10. Is Corbett correct to argue that Great Britain's effort in the Peninsular War (1807-1814) played a decisive role in the defeat of Napoleon?

11. How well do Corbett's principles of maritime strategy explain the outcome of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon?

12. Is Mahan correct to argue that Britain's triumph over Napoleonic France was only possible through the "exhaustion" of the French state? (See, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, vol. 2, page 411).

13. Was Napoleon's Continental System the single greatest factor in his eventual defeat?

14. What enabled the final coalition to succeed in bringing an end to the Napoleonic Wars when all its predecessors had failed?

15. Could Napoleon's nemesis Great Britain ever have succeeded in his overthrow without the combined efforts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia?

16. In the Peloponnesian War, the land power, Sparta, defeated the sea power, Athens. What differences can be found in this case to account for the opposite result in the wars between Britain and France?

17. Napoleon helped inspire Clausewitz's concept of "Genius" and Clausewitz even labeled Napoleon "the God of War." How can this be reconciled with the outcome of the case?

18. Did Napoleon ever win a decisive victory?

19. Are the factors that make for a strategically effective coalition different for winning a war than for maintaining the peace?

20. What lessons do the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon hold for political and military leaders in the twenty-first century?

Readings:

1. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. New York: Random House, 1987. Pages 115-139. **BOOK**

[Kennedy provides a grand strategic overview of the period addressed by this case study. He describes the European balance of power in the eighteenth century, emphasizing financial developments and geopolitical trends. In addition, Kennedy provides a synopsis of the period from the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 until the downfall of Napoleon in 1815, focusing on Britain and France and their position in the European state system.]

2. Doyle, William. *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pages 19-64. **BOOK**

[Doyle provides a brief overview of the French Revolution and explains its significance.]

3. Weigley, Russell F. *The Age of Battles: The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Breitenfeld to Waterloo*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. Pages 279-543. **BOOK**

[Whereas reading no. 1 (Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*) addresses the case from the grand strategic level, Weigley provides an overview of warfare during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era at the levels of strategy and operations. Weigley critiques the leadership of Napoleon, Wellington, and a host of other senior military officers while placing these leaders in the context of an evolving profession of arms. The reading also serves as a point of departure for assessing the potential decisiveness of the military instrument to the exclusion of the other instruments of national power.]

4. Duffy, Michael. "British Policy in the War against Revolutionary France," in *Britain and Revolutionary France: Conflict, Subversion and Propaganda*, Colin James, ed. Exeter Studies in History, no. 5. Exeter: University of Exeter, 1983. Pages 11-26. **(Leganto)**

[Duffy identifies four main British policies during the French Revolution and Napoleonic era. He then explains how the British implemented these policies to develop a policy-strategy match.]

5. Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press Edition, 1988. Part I: Chapters 1-5; Part II: Chapters 1 & 3; Appendix: the "Green Pamphlet" War Course: Notes on Strategy. **BOOK**

[Sir Julian Corbett admired and built upon Clausewitz's *On War*, adapting it to offer strategic guidance for maritime powers. His *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* is important for understanding Britain's strategy in the Napoleonic Wars.]

6. Corbett, Julian S. "Napoleon and the British Navy after Trafalgar." *The Quarterly Review*, vol. 237, no 471 (April 1922). Pages 238-255. **(Selected Readings)**

[This article addresses Trafalgar and British decision-making in its aftermath. Of particular importance is Corbett's concept of the "disposal force" or the use of a land force for the purpose of expeditionary warfare.]

7. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire 1793-1812*. Vol. 2. 9th edition. Boston: Little, Brown, 1898. Pages 375-411. **(Selected Readings)**

[Alfred Thayer Mahan is renowned for his writings on sea power, maritime strategy, naval warfare, and international relations. In this excerpt from *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, Mahan examines the effectiveness of sea powers in long-term competitions and their means of defeating continental powers.]

8. Davey, James. *In Nelson's Wake: The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Pages 230-253. **(Leganto)**

[This chapter provides an overview of economic warfare in the maritime domain. This includes privateers, blockades, convoys, and most importantly, Napoleon's Continental System.]

9. Ross, Steve. "Caging the Eagle: Napoleonic War Coalitions," in *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine, eds. London: Routledge, 2008. Pages 25-32. **(Leganto)**

[Ross, a former Naval War College professor, examines coalition dynamics to assess Britain's evolving role and explains the success of the final coalition in defeating Napoleon.]

10. Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994. Pages 78-102. **BOOK**

[Kissinger highlights the events and personalities surrounding the Congress of Vienna and the Concert of Europe that emerged in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat. He emphasizes strategic leadership in shaping the international environment as Europe transitioned from decades of war to almost a century without a major European-wide war.]

IV. IMPERIAL GERMANY FROM THE WARS OF UNIFICATION TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR - THE RISE AND FALL OF A PEER COMPETITOR

General: This case study examines several strategy and policy course themes and concepts, starting with Winning the Peace and Preparing for War. The readings and lectures provide the basis for an in-depth inquiry into the strategic effects of shifting power balances within the international environment, assessing the extent to which it is possible to shape the foreign policy choices and strategies of rising great powers, and the failure to deter a major global war. This case on imperial Germany considers the critically important question of why the leaders of a thriving, major industrial and trading power, which stood to gain economically and politically by adopting the role of a peaceful international stakeholder, chose instead to provoke wars in an attempt to dominate regional rivals and pursue global aspirations.

War marked the emergence of Imperial Germany as a great power during the nineteenth century. The north German state of Prussia, with its capital in Berlin, fought three limited wars known as the Wars of German Unification—the Danish War of 1864, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871—to forge a united Germany under its rule. The architect of these wars was the legendary statesman, Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck's strategic leadership receives close attention in this case study. While serving as Prussia's Minister-President, Bismarck proved a master at managing the delicate policy-strategy relationship in limited wars. His goal was to make Prussia the dominant power in Germany. Bismarck understood that, to defeat Prussia's rivals in war, he needed to calibrate objectives, effectively integrate military operations and diplomacy, and balance the triangular relationship between the people, the government, and the army. Bismarck faced and took great risks in this. There was always the danger of defeat on the battlefield, protracted war, or escalation to a wider, general European conflict. Bismarck sought to control escalation in ever more ambitious wars and prevent great-power intervention against Prussia. Studying Bismarck, this master of wars fought for limited aims, provides insights into the making of policy and strategy by a country that seeks to challenge the international status quo without provoking escalation into a wider war.

The story of German policy and strategy after Bismarck left office in 1890 provides a cautionary tale of how a great power can bring ruin upon itself when a new generation of leaders adopts self-defeating strategies that provoke a strong, determined coalition of encircling enemies. For a period of some twenty years after the Franco-Prussian War, while Bismarck still held the reins of power, Germany functioned as a satiated power on the international stage, trying to preserve the peace and consolidate the gains won in its earlier wars. After 1890, Germany's economy made impressive strides, becoming an economic powerhouse, with remarkable growth exhibited by its industry and foreign trade. Germany, already possessing the best army in Europe, sought to acquire a powerful navy as well by harnessing the wealth provided by its growing economy. Its rulers wanted to translate this increasing strength in "hard power" into enhanced international standing and security. This new course was called *Weltpolitik*. In this attempt, they badly miscalculated, putting at risk Germany's considerable economic and technological achievements, and bringing together a powerful coalition of adversaries intent on stopping Berlin's bid to establish hegemony over Europe.

Bismarck's successors pushed for greater policy aims that threatened to overturn the existing international order. The German government pursued an international confrontation to bring on war during the summer of 1914 and overthrow the European balance of power. Its prewar military preparations and strategic planning proved inadequate to achieve these ambitious policy goals. Germany's aims in the First World War came to reflect all too accurately the ambitions of nationalist extremists who sought to impose German hegemony. This dramatic escalation of political aims galvanized Germany's enemies to fight all the harder, resulting in a war fought for high stakes and with very high casualties. At the end of that hideous struggle, Imperial Germany, less than fifty years after its founding, suffered defeat and revolution. This case study, by examining the Instruments of National Power, the International Dimension of Strategy, and the Decision for War, seeks to illuminate what led to the triumphal emergence of Imperial Germany in the nineteenth century and to its later devastating defeat in the twentieth.

Another key aspect of this case is to examine the interaction among technological innovation, geostrategic position, geopolitical environment, naval strategy, and operational doctrines for waging warfare at sea. The German navy undertook a long-term transformation of its operational capabilities, changing from a coastal defense force to an interdiction force that could strike at a distance against critical shipping lanes. This transformation posed a serious security challenge to Great Britain, the world's leading naval power, undermining its ability to retain command of the maritime commons. This case delves into the attitudes of political and naval leaders toward naval force structure, maritime strategy, and risk in the employment of naval forces and how they sought to manage that risk.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Germany's leaders concluded that to attain their foreign policy and security ambitions required building a powerful battle fleet to pose a direct threat to the very center of British power. Germany wanted to coerce Britain's leaders away from joining any hostile coalition of great powers. Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the German secretary of the navy, devised the strategic blueprint for this strategy. Meanwhile, Britain sought to deter Germany's rulers from embarking on an aggressive war to establish a German hegemony over Europe. Both countries failed in their aims. Germany's attempt to overturn Britain's command of the maritime commons also led to confrontation with the United States during the First World War. President Woodrow Wilson worked to dissuade Germany from embarking on a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare. This case provides an opportunity to examine how major powers interact with each other in the international system and why it is so difficult to devise a strategy that can successfully shape the actions of emerging competitors at strategic crossroads.

The strategic effects of transformations in warfare form another important part of this case study. German military leaders designed and built armed forces to fight short-duration, high-intensity conflicts. The military professionalism of Helmuth von Moltke, chief of the Prussian and later German general staff, made possible the victories achieved in the Wars of German Unification. Railways, the telegraph, rapid-fire rifles, and longer-range artillery transformed the conduct of operations and increased battlefield lethality. The Prussian army capitalized on these developments to gain a military edge on its adversaries and achieve rapid victories. At sea, Germany adopted a disruptive strategy that employed submarines as weapons of commerce destruction, striking at British and neutral merchant shipping. Instead of defeating Britain, however, this radical strategy failed. To combat the German submarine menace, Britain

adopted convoys for the protection of merchant shipping, blunting the damage inflicted by German submarines. Germany's actions at sea provoked the intervention of the United States in the fighting, blunting Germany's efforts to quickly win the war at sea. Military transformation is no substitute for strategic wisdom.

Perhaps no case study in civil-military relations provides a more sobering example of the adverse strategic consequences that can result from a breakdown in the proper relationship between statesman and soldier. World War I shows how strategic choices, for good or ill, result from the actions of decision makers who bring differing bureaucratic backgrounds, strategic conceptions, and personalities to their deliberations. Bismarck used war to outmaneuver his domestic political foes, who wanted to control government policies by asserting the power of the Prussian parliament and the primacy of the rule of law. Later, during the First World War, deep disputes wracked the German political and military leadership. These disagreements pitted the chancellor against the army's chief of staff and the navy's leadership, as well as front-line theater military commanders against the High Command. Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff emerged as national heroes, owing to their battlefield victories over Russia on the Eastern Front. They used their popularity to establish what amounted to a military dictatorship by the middle of the war. Militarism, as represented by Hindenburg and Ludendorff, provided the driving force behind Germany's actions and self-defeating strategic behavior during the First World War. Examining Germany underscores how war can distort the relationship among a country's people, government, and armed forces with disastrous consequences.

Finally, this case gives students excellent opportunities to consider the strategic effects of operations to enhance warfighting effectiveness. Key operations such as the Schlieffen Plan, the Dardanelles Campaign, Germany's unrestricted U-boat campaign, the Verdun and Somme offensives, and Germany's final Spring Offensive are covered in detail to this end. This approach allows the case to uniquely bring together the elements of analysis in PLO 4, integrating theory, history, concepts of sea power, and doctrine.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1.Which was more important for the Prussian-German successes in the 1864-1871 conflicts – Bismarck's system of alliances or the military's ability to wage war expediently?

2. The unification of Germany under Bismarck reshaped the strategic balance of power in Europe. Did that make war inevitable among the great European powers?

3. Who should be blamed for the rising tensions in Europe—Bismarck's successors for their inability to master the international system, or the Iron Chancellor for creating ineffective structures that could not function without him?

4. Was the Tirpitz Plan a realistic expression of grand strategy or a miscalculation?

5. Could Germany have applied the lesson of the Wars of German Unification in 1914 by isolating its enemies diplomatically and fighting them separately, or had alliance politics and great-power commitments made that strategy impossible?

6. Clausewitz argues that the military should not expect to act without political oversight, and the political realm should not "make demands on war which war could not fulfill." Did Imperial Germany fail to follow Clausewitz's advice because military planning dominated political decision-making, or because Germany's political leaders made strategic demands that war could not realistically fulfill?

7. Kaiser Wilhelm II and Admiral Tirpitz maintained that Germany needed a powerful battle fleet to deter Great Britain from contesting German aspirations to become a world power. Did Germany's battle fleet fail to deter Great Britain because it made Britain feel more threatened, or because Britain's decision to enter the war was driven more by Belgian neutrality and the European balance of power than by naval calculations?

8. Was Great Britain unable to manage Germany's rise peacefully because German ambitions were inherently threatening to British interests, or because British diplomacy failed to accommodate Germany's desire for world-power status?

9. At the outbreak of fighting in 1914, the European powers anticipated a war of short duration. Why were these expectations not borne out?

10. Thucydides described the motivations of honor, fear, and self-interest during the Peloponnesian War. What role did these motivations play in German decision-making before the outbreak of the First World War?

11. Did going to war with Germany in August 1914 serve Britain's long-term interests?

12. From which did Great Britain derive the most strategic advantage, its possession of the world's strongest navy, its financial preeminence, or its colonial empire during the First World War?

13. Did the major powers' inability to reach an early peace settlement during the First World War represent a failure of diplomacy and leadership?

14. In January 1917, did Germany's leaders have any better, realistic alternative strategic course of action open to them other than a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare?

15. Corbett wrote *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* to guide Great Britain's strategy in a future war. To what extent did Britain follow a grand strategy in the First World War that reflected Corbett's strategic principles?

16. Which country—Germany or Great Britain—did a better job of adapting to the changing character of war during the period covered by this case study?

17. Would Germany have won the First World War if the United States had not intervened in the fighting?

18. Throughout the war, the Allied Powers (plus the United States after 1917) enjoyed at least a fivefold population advantage and threefold superiority in gross domestic product over the Central Powers. Why were they unable to translate this immense quantitative advantage into victory sooner?

19. The First World War required that political and military leaders balance the allocation of resources among multiple theaters. What lessons does this case study offer about the effective allocation of resources to achieve victory in a multi-theater conflict?

20. For more than four decades after German unification, peace prevailed in Europe and several international crises were solved diplomatically, but fighting still broke out in 1914. What lessons does this experience hold for the United States regarding the rise of Great Power competitors today?

Readings:

1. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. New York: Random House, 1987. p.182-203 and 215-274. **BOOK**

[This overview reading presents the rise and fall of Imperial Germany in an international context. The first part discusses the political, military, economic, and technological conditions underlying the Prussian-German successes in the 1864-1871 Unification Wars. It then bridges to the challenges Imperial Germany presented for its neighbors, followed by a review of the international order in the late nineteenth century. The second part examines how the rest of the great powers, including the United States, developed economically and politically from the late nineteenth century to 1914. It then offers a grand strategic overview of the First World War.]

2. Clark, Christopher. *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. 510-555. **(Leganto)**

[Christopher Clark, a leading expert in German history, offers a comprehensive overview of the Wars of German Unification, their course, and the international and domestic context. It also sheds light on Bismarck's role and the challenges the Prussian military faced.]

3. Murray, Michelle. "*Weltpolitik*: The German Aspiration for World Power Status**.**" *The Struggle for Recognition in International Relations: Status, Revisionism, and Rising Power*, p. 87-112. **(Selected Readings)**

[Murray offers novel analysis of the rationale behind *Weltpolitik* and the naval build-up. She discusses the Navy's role as an instrument of nation-building and international policy and suggests possible off-ramps to lower European tensions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The reading bridges the period between German Unification and 1914.]

4. MacMillan, Margaret. “Strategy, War Plans, and the First World War,” in *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, p.471-494. **BOOK**.

[The chapter offers a comprehensive and accessible review of the challenges faced by the major players on the eve of the First World War and how they sought to solve them. MacMillan also provides insight into civil-military relations in Europe during this period, a major theme of the case study. She also discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-1914 coalitions.]

5. Strachan, Hew. *The First World War*. New York: Viking, 2004. Chapters 2, 4-10. Pages 3-64, 97-340. **BOOK**

[Hew Strachan, one of the world’s leading authorities on the First World War, presents a lucid account of this hideous conflict, providing essential background information for evaluating Germany’s policy and strategy.]

6. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. London: Ashfield Press, paperback edition, 1987. Chapters 8-9. Pages 205-265. **BOOK**

[These chapters examine Great Britain’s response to the growing threats it faced in the maritime environment at the beginning of the twentieth century. Kennedy appraises Britain’s efforts to stay ahead of the challenge posed by the German naval buildup engineered by Tirpitz. The reading then provides an overview of the British naval strategy in the First World War.]

7. Offer, Avner. *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, paperback edition, 1991. Chapters 22-24. Pages 321-367. **(Selected Readings)**

[This insightful reading explains how economic, political, and military factors intertwine in the German strategic choices and pays special attention to the navy’s role in these processes. The first chapter discusses the Tirpitz Plan and economic and social forces driving Imperial Germany’s naval buildup in the late nineteenth century. The second examines economic and social pressure shaping the German desire for a short war on the eve of 1914. The last chapter explores the flawed assessments and planning assumptions behind Germany’s decision to embark on a disruptive, asymmetric strategy of unrestricted submarine warfare.]

8. Kagan, Robert. “Woodrow Wilson and the Rise of American Grand Strategy,” in *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, Hal Brands, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. Pages 545-568. **BOOK**

[This reading analyzes the difficult path toward war termination. Kagan examines the rise of the United States within the international system and President Woodrow Wilson’s views on American power and purpose on the world stage.]

V. THE INTERWAR WORLD: THE CHALLENGES OF WINNING THE PEACE, AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF GREAT POWER COMPETITION

General: The 1920s and 1930s present instructive parallels to our contemporary security environment. Unlike other cases in the Strategy and Policy Course, this one does not focus on a major war or series of wars. Instead, it addresses a period between major great power conflicts. It asks questions of how states sought to "win the peace" in the aftermath of the First World War, and why those same states began preparing for war in the 1930s. Although the case broadly addresses the interwar world, Britain receives particular emphasis to organize and focus the case. American leaders today can learn much from how Britain tried to defend commitments around the world against rising revisionist powers while laboring under significant political and economic constraints.

This case study emphasizes several important concepts. These include the challenge of creating a lasting peace; the lingering impact of war on societies and economies; the difficulty in balancing security challenges with the available resources and instruments of national power; the influence of ideology on strategic decision-making; and the reemergence of great-power hostility.

We begin with efforts to secure a lasting peace after the First World War. The war had exhausted European states and empires. Four empires—Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire—had collapsed, and the British and French empires were grievously wounded. A complex series of treaties collectively known as the Versailles peace settlement attempted to satisfy the victors and prevent another European war. Unfortunately, it soon proved impossible for the victors to enforce the peace. Even among the victors, there was a lack of will to commit the human and material resources required to rebuild the postwar world order. Britain and France emerged from the war weakened, while the United States refused to undertake any political or military responsibility for upholding the post war international system.

The Versailles settlement appeared to be functioning well in the relatively prosperous 1920s. The critical blow to the new collective security system was the Great Depression. It began with a financial crisis in the United States that reverberated across the globe during the 1930s, causing profound economic and political turmoil. International trade plummeted and unemployment spiked, and the resulting economic weakness shaped how governments confronted rising security challenges. The failure of democratic states to deal effectively with the economic challenges of the postwar order discredited both liberalism and capitalism.

Extremist parties found a fertile political landscape in the 1930s. The First World War destroyed the moral foundations of the pre-war social, economic, and political order of the Western powers. New ideologies, including communism and fascism, seemed to promise an exit from the failures of liberal, democratic, and constitutional politics. Fascist leaders, including the Nazis in Germany, implemented new social programs and economic plans that seemed to mitigate the worst ravages of the Great Depression. Communism, meanwhile, appeared to offer an attractive alternative to a broken capitalist system.

Leaders of these rival systems also adopted aggressive foreign policy objectives, including upending the political and territorial arrangements of Versailles. These revisionist powers included those that suffered defeat in the First World War, such as Germany and the Soviet Union. Ostensibly victorious powers also opted for new authoritarian regimes, including Italy and Japan, who believed their allies had cheated them of their rightful spoils and place in the world.

Confronting them, the democratic powers were divided and lacked either the political will, or the military means to enforce the peace settlement. The United States was wary of international commitments and ambivalent to the global order that Britain and France were trying to maintain. Britain was constrained by a weak post-war economy, geopolitical overextension, a population fatigued by war, and an elite committed to maintaining the empire. France, suffering from severe physical damage from the First World War, was unable to enforce German compliance to Versailles or to construct alliances that could successfully deter Berlin and stabilize the European system.

The example of Britain juggling multiple international challenges while adapting to domestic political and economic upheaval is instructive for the United States today. The empire expanded in the aftermath of the First World War, creating new policing and defense burdens at the very moment that popular support for an interventionist foreign policy waned and London faced pressure to reduce its defense expenditures. The British experience in the interwar world also provides insights into the difficulties military organizations face when confronted by multiple and sometimes contradictory challenges in peacetime. Britain had transformed its conventional military capabilities during the Great War, but this capability eroded rapidly as the army returned to constabulary roles in the Empire. The capabilities required for imperial policing were necessary for maintaining the British Empire but were unsuitable for great power conflict, and Britain lacked the capacity to preserve both sets of skills.

Meanwhile, there was parallel unravelling of regional stability in East Asia. Each great power in the region was revisionist: China was struggling to reunify in the aftermath of a nationalist revolution and maintain its territorial integrity against colonial encroachment, Russia was newly ruled by a Bolshevik pariah regime determined to secure itself against a two-front war, and Imperial Japan sought to acquire territory and resources it believed would guarantee the future of its growing population and rise as a great power. Without a meaningful constituency for status quo, the seeds of a highly destructive Pacific War were sown. Events in Asia ensured that the coming war would be truly global in a way that even the Great War was not.

This case study encourages students to confront the hard choices that must be made by strategists even in peacetime. Choosing between unpalatable options, considering tradeoffs between different choices, and facing growing threats with a static or declining resource base are profound and difficult problems for decision makers. Anticipating the impact of changes in the global economic system, of emerging authoritarian ideologies, and of military commitments in secondary theaters remains a concern for contemporary military and political leaders in a period of renewed great power competition.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Could the victorious powers have "won the peace" in the aftermath of the First World War?

2. How well did British leaders balance domestic, European, and imperial challenges during this period?

3. Did Britain's commitment to maintaining and expanding its empire during the interwar years make strategic sense given its other challenges at home and in Europe?

4. Did British leaders develop viable strategies for countering the threats from revisionist states and ideologies?

5. From 1700-1914, Britain successfully utilized coalitions to maintain the balance of power in Europe to its own economic and political advantage, and to contain aggressive revisionist powers. Why was it unable to accomplish this in the interwar period?

6. How effectively did Britain's leaders in the 1920s and 1930s manage the risks they faced by following a policy of holding down defense spending?

7. How should Britain have allocated its scarce resources among competing instruments of military power?

8. Was the British empire more of a liability than an asset?

9. Did the rise of air power present more of a strategic opportunity or a strategic threat to Britain in the period from 1919 to 1940?

10. Which theorist, Alfred Thayer Mahan or Julian Corbett, offered more relevant maritime strategic guidance for interwar leaders, and why**?**

11. How effectively did Britain respond to the challenges and threats to its maritime security that emerged between the world wars?

12. How did the Great Depression undermine the global political order?

13. Which region posed a greater threat to global security and stability during the interwar period: Europe or Asia?

14. Were domestic or international factors more important for explaining Hitler's rise to power in Germany?

15. Was China's inability to maintain regional stability in the Interwar driven more by domestic or international factors?

16. Did British leaders have any viable alternative courses of action other than appeasement in managing the strategic challenges posed by the rise of Nazi Germany?

17. Could the obstacles to forming an effective coalition against Hitler's Germany have been overcome in the 1930s?

18. Did British leaders commit a strategic error by going to war against Germany in September 1939?

19. What lessons regarding the impact of global economic change does the period between the two world wars hold for political and military leaders in the twenty-first century?

Readings:

1. Kagan, Donald. *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*. New York: Doubleday, 1995. Pages 281-417. **BOOK**

[Kagan provides a general overview of the key issues from the end of fighting in the First World War to the reemergence of global war in 1939.]

2. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. New York: Random House, 1987. Pages 275-343. **BOOK**

[Kennedy explores the relationship between a country's international position and its economic vitality. The assigned chapter examines the period between the two world wars.]

3. Marks, Sally. "Mistakes and Myths: The Allies, Germany and the Versailles Treaty, 1918-1921." *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 85, no. 3 (September 2013). Pages 632-659. **(Selected Readings)**

[Marks emphasizes that the current scholarly consensus is that the Treaty of Versailles was not fatally flawed, did not cause the Depression, the rise of Hitler, or the Second World War. Yet many readers cling to these ideas. Marks considers how an intense propaganda campaign launched in Germany and Britain against the treaty and an unfavorable international situation made enforcement of the treaty difficult and contributed to the undermining of the postwar peace even before Hitler took power in Germany.]

4. Gooch, John. "'Building buffers and filling vacuums': Great Britain and the Middle East, 1914-1922" in *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War*, Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pages 240-264. **(Leganto)**

[This essay provides background on Britain's foreign policy choices in the Middle East.]

5. Townshend, Charles. “Civilization and ‘Frightfulness’: Air Control in the Middle East between the Wars,” in *Warfare, Diplomacy and Politics: Essays in Honour of A. J. P. Taylor,* Chris Wrigley, ed. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986. Pages 142-162. **(Leganto)**

[This article explores the limitations of air power as instrument of British imperial control in the Middle East as a cheaper alternative to using large numbers of ground forces.]

6. Paine, S. C. M. The Wars for Asia, 1911-1949. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pages 3-70. **BOOK**

[Paine, a Strategy & Policy and NWC University Professor Emerita, traces the collapse of East Asian regional stability. Successive chapters cover Japan’s territorial ambitions on the Asian mainland and strategic competition with Russia and China, as well as China’s struggles to maintain its national unity amidst social unrest while surrounded by revisionist powers.]

7. Bell, P.M.H. *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*. third edition, New York: Pearson Longman, 2007. Pages 60-184. **(E-book/Leganto)**

[Bell analyzes the underlying ideological and political forces at work in Europe on the eve World War II to include Italian Fascism, German Nazism, Soviet Communism a parliamentary democracy in France and Britain. Bell also analyzes the Great Depression’s effects on international relations and traces the economic factors that contributed to the outbreak of war.]

8. Murray, Williamson and Allan R. Millett, eds. *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pages 329-383. **BOOK**

[This study examines how the armed forces of the major powers during the interwar period developed the doctrine, force structure, and weapons that they would employ during the Second World War. Studying military transformation from a comparative perspective provides insight into how the British armed services fell behind those of competitors between the wars.]

9. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. Atlantic Heights, New Jersey: The Ashfield Press, 1987. Pages 267-298. **BOOK**

[Kennedy examines Britain’s challenges in maintaining its position of naval leadership between the two world wars]

10. Maiolo, Joseph A. “Did the Royal Navy Decline Between the Two World Wars.” *The RUSI Journal*, vol. 159, no. 4 (2014). Pages 18-24. **(Leganto)**

[Maiolo argues that Britain’s navy remained strong relative to its international challengers.]

11. Murray, Williamson. “Munich, 1938: The Military Confrontation.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3 (December 1979). Pages 282-302. **(Leganto)**

[Murray assesses pre-WWII European power dynamics and analyzes whether Britain and France should have fought in 1938 rather than 1939.]

VI. THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE RISE OF THE SUPERPOWERS

General: The Second World War is rich with lessons in policy and strategy relevant to understanding the contemporary international security environment. It was a global great-power conflagration with fighting in major theaters of operations on the world's oceans, in Europe, on the mainland of Asia, and across the Middle East and North Africa. This case study builds on the previous examination of the interwar era by analyzing the victories achieved by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in the war's opening stages. Despite early successes, the tide turned against the Axis as a powerful coalition formed against them, determined not only to roll back their conquests but to overthrow the regimes that started the war. This case gives special emphasis to the role of the United States and the Soviet Union in bringing about Axis defeat. Triumphant in war, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as rival superpowers on the world stage, a rivalry that shaped the international system for the next forty years.

The Second World War opened with Germany and Japan gaining striking operational successes that conquered vast empires. In Asia, Japan was dissatisfied with the existing international order. Japan aspired to be the dominant great power in Asia, with an empire that provided it with markets and key resources. To achieve these aims, Japan expanded its empire by invading Manchuria in 1931 and then attacked Nationalist China in 1937. The Japanese army won victory after battlefield victory over the Chinese forces arrayed against it, capturing the Nationalist capital of Nanjing and seizing large swarths of China's territory. These victories, however, were not enough to break the will of Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of Nationalist China, or of the Chinese people, who fought on.

The United States responded to Japan's aggression in China with increasingly harsh economic sanctions. When Japan invaded French Indochina to cut the most important remaining supply route to China, the United States responded with a total oil embargo. Japan responded with an offensive to drive the Western powers out of Asia via simultaneous attacks across the region in December 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor galvanized the American people to fight as the United States entered the war. The ensuing conflict provides an example of warfare in the maritime domain between major industrial powers in a theater of operations similar to today's Indo-Pacific Command. Joint and coalition operations raged from eastern India and the Bay of Bengal across the Pacific to Alaska and south to Australia. With the bulk of the Japanese army tied down on the Asian mainland fighting in China and Burma, or deterring the Soviets, the Japanese navy bore the brunt of war against the United States.

In Europe, Hitler's Germany embarked on wars of conquest that threatened the international balance of power. Under the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact, Germany and the Soviet Union divided Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. This collaboration enabled Hitler's legions to win lightning victories over Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and (most stunning of all) France. Great Britain held out against the Nazi onslaught, despite heavy bombing of the British homeland by the Luftwaffe. Led by Winston Churchill, Britain continued the struggle in the hope that the United States would enter the war to overturn Germany's conquests and overthrow the Nazi regime. Britain's strategic fortunes turned for the better in June 1941 when the Nazi-Soviet partnership collapsed, and Hitler suddenly turned against Stalin to stake out an empire in the east in pursuit of *Lebensraum* ("living space"). Operation Barbarossa

inflicted grievous losses on the Soviet Red Army, conquered enormous amounts of territory, and brought German troops within sight of Moscow by December 1941.

But Moscow did not fall. The Soviet state had undertaken extensive preparations for a coming war during the interwar period. The Red Army's order of battle was much stronger, and it possessed more world-class weaponry than Germany had anticipated. Despite enormous losses, the Soviets continued to field fighting forces, whereas German forces were ground down by the time they reached Moscow's suburbs. Stalin also redeployed units from the Soviet Far East to defend the capital. These fresh troops spearheaded an offensive in bitterly cold weather that drove the Germans back. With German reversals before Moscow and Leningrad, Germany and the Soviet Union became locked in a grisly war that tested the political, social, and economic stamina of both countries, as well as the operational prowess of their armed forces. The conflict on the Eastern Front ended with the Red Army inflicting crushing losses on Germany's army and marching on Berlin. Stalin would boast that the Soviet system had passed the test of war and emerged victorious. The cost of triumph was, however, hideously high in blood and treasure: including the loss of nearly thirty million Soviet lives. This massive struggle provides critical insights into contemporary European security.

Japan's Asian advance and the German invasion of the Soviet Union brought together a Grand Alliance consisting of China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. While Japan and Germany gained early victories, the tide turned in 1942 when American, British, and Soviet armed forces began to fight more effectively and go on the offensive. This change in fortunes occurred even before the United States had fully mobilized its war economy. Successful campaigns in North Africa and the Solomon Islands set the stage for massive amphibious operations in both the Pacific and Europe. In addition, Britain and the United States conducted air offensives against the German and Japanese homelands that had important strategic effects in diverting weapons and personnel from fighting fronts, hurting their economies, and disrupting their societies. Politically, the issue of where and when the United States and Britain should open the Second European Front tested the cohesion of the Grand Alliance until D-Day in June 1944. By coordinating their offensive operations and economic resources, the Grand Alliance achieved the complete defeat of Germany and Japan. This case study highlights the international dimension of strategy theme and the challenges of strategic integration within a coalition.

This case study also highlights the economic and material dimensions of strategy. The Second World War showcased technological and military innovation by the combatants, the emergence of new military domains, the enormous logistic burdens involved in fighting a global contest, the industrial demands of modern war, the mobilization challenges of protracted war, the impact of war on societies and civilian populations, and the creation of atomic weapons used in war termination. The Axis powers sought to make conquest pay and increase their own combat power by extracting resources from conquered territories and peoples. On the Allied side, Britain and the United States devoted considerable domestic resources to long-range bomber forces to undertake devastating air attacks on Germany and Japan. Sharing resources and technology knit together the Grand Alliance and was critical to victory over the Axis. American Lend Lease increased the Soviet Union's warfighting strength and offensive punch. Food supplied by Lend

Lease helped feed Soviet citizens and soldiers while American motor vehicles increased the mobility and fighting effectiveness of the Red Army.

State-funded technological change generated new means of waging war. After the first important use of tanks, aircraft, and submarines in the First World War, mechanized warfare, strategic bombing, carrier strikes, and unrestricted submarine warfare became central to military action in the Second World War. Germany and Japan used innovative technologies to achieve remarkable operational success from 1940 to 1942, even though their early advantage did not last. Germany's later development of ballistic missiles and jet aircraft heralded a change in the character of warfare. Of special importance for the future, the United States, in cooperation with Britain, developed the first atomic weapons. American and British leaders feared that Germany might develop nuclear weapons and gain a decisive first-strike edge for winning the war. , Britain and the United States won this first nuclear arms race, and from this point onward nuclear weapons affect every case onward in the Strategy and Policy Course. Nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles remain a most potent danger in today's international security environment.

Global force management is another crucial element of this case study, which examines the strategic concepts and courses of action that leaders considered during the war. Strategies such as "Europe-first" (proposed in 1940-1941 by Admiral Harold Stark, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations) raise the question of how to sustain alliance efforts over the long-term to achieve national security ends. Several strategic challenges confronted the United States: German and Japanese actions in 1940-1941; Stalin's maneuvering during the war to expand Soviet control over territory; as well as the pull of offensive operations to maintain strategic initiative in the war against Japan. Successful leaders must manage the risks and rewards involved in the allocation of forces and resources among different theaters.

Finally, this case study examines the rise of the United States as the world's leading sea power. At the war's outset, Britain had the world's strongest navy while Japan fielded a powerful naval force, that pioneered in carrier aviation and developed powerful new weapons and platforms. Defeating the Axis required winning the contest for the world's oceans. The United States Navy fought alongside British and Canadian fleets to defeat the German threat to Atlantic sea lanes which had done immense damage to Allied shipping. The victory in the North Atlantic was a precondition for the bringing about the offensive drives required to crush Nazi Germany. In the Pacific, the United States built up the carrier and amphibious forces that surged across the region and broke through the island chains that Japan hoped would shield its empire. The Navy fought and won the battles of Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, Philippine Sea, Leyte Gulf, and Okinawa against a determined and skillful Japanese opponent. The Pacific War was the most intense maritime conflict ever fought. Near its end, Japanese leaders resorted to kamikaze tactics, which foreshadowed naval warfare in the age of precision strike. The struggle to command the world's sea lanes is worthy of any history told by Alfred Thayer Mahan or Sir Julian Corbett. This victory rested on the mobilization of the industrial plant necessary to build and repair fighting ships and merchant shipping, development and adoption of technologies, and innovation in doctrine for the employment of naval forces. Studying the United States Navy and the naval campaigns of the Second World War provide valuable insights for understanding current efforts to increase shipbuilding capacity, to build up naval strength, to embrace new technologies, and to develop new operational concepts for warfighting.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. What strategic advantages did Hitler and Stalin gain and what strategic disadvantages did they suffer from being dictators?

2. To what extent did ideological factors determine Hitler and Stalin's strategic choices?

3. Did Germany and Japan have viable strategic options to avoid catastrophic defeat after the United States entered the war?

4. In Book 8, Chapter 9 of *On War*, Clausewitz states a secondary theater should be opened only if that is "exceptionally rewarding." What secondary theater in the Second World War can best be described as "exceptionally rewarding" for the United States?

5. Leading maritime powers often try to shift the burden of land warfare onto coalition partners. What general conclusions can one draw from the efforts of American and British leaders in the Second World War to overcome problems of burden sharing and prevent their coalition from falling apart?

6. Air power was in its infancy in the First World War but reached maturity in the Second. What are the most important lessons to be drawn from its use in World War II?

7. How well do the strategic theories of Mahan and Corbett explain the outcome of the Second World War?

8. What accounts for the Allied victory at sea in the Second World War?

9. Was a "Pacific-first" option a viable strategic alternative for the United States?

10. Does American strategic performance in this case study represent a good model for the integration of different instruments of national power?

11. How well did Roosevelt manage the demands of multiple theaters and strategic partners during World War II?

12. Stalin ended the war as a victor but at enormous cost. How could he have fought Nazi Germany more effectively?

13. Of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin, who best handled the task of managing a global war?

14. Drawing upon this case study, the Napoleonic Wars, and the First World War, what are the elements that make for a strategically effective multinational coalition?

15. The Second World War involved balancing the allocation of resources among multiple theaters. Drawing upon this case study and others in the Strategy and Policy Course, how should leaders effectively allocate resources to achieve victory in a multi-theater conflict?

16. What insights can the experience of the United States Navy in the Second World War offer to today's strategic leaders and operational planners about the character of war at sea and maritime strategy?

17. Were the strategic benefits of targeting civilian populations commensurate with the political, ethical, and moral costs?

Readings:

1. Mawdsley, Evan. *World War II: A New History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, second edition, 2020. Pages 1- 364. **(BOOK)**

[One of the world's leading historians of the Second World War provides an insightful up-to-date account of the global conflict. His assessment of the political aims, strategic choices, and conduct of operations offers essential background for undertaking a policy and strategy analysis of the war.]

2. Simms, Brendan. "Strategies of Geopolitical Revolution: Hitler and Stalin," in Hal Brands, ed., *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2023), pp. 616-637. (**BOOK)**

[Simms compares the grand strategies of Hitler and Stalin and evaluates the ideological, geopolitical, and pragmatic considerations that shaped them.]

3. Wegner, Bernd. "The Road to Defeat: The German Campaigns in Russia 1941-43." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1990). Pages 105-127. **(Leganto)**

[Wegner addresses the first years of the war on the Eastern Front from the German perspective, showing how German strategic choices in the war against the Soviet Union contributed to Germany's eventual defeat. Wegner also details the role of Nazi ideology in decision-making by Hitler and his generals.]

4. Baer, George W. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994. Pages 146-272. (**BOOK)**

[In this prize-winning book, George Baer provides an important account of the rise of the United States Navy to global leadership, capping a fifty-year great-power contest for naval mastery. His study examines the buildup of the Navy on the eve of war and its role in bringing about the defeat of Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. This reading is especially valuable for strategic assessments of the global management of American forces during the war.]

5. Plan Dog Memorandum (November 12, 1940). (**Selected Readings)**

[The Plan Dog memorandum, drafted by Chief of Naval Operations (and Naval War College graduate) H.R. Stark, assessed a possible two-front war in Europe and the Pacific. Stark explores options and recommends a policy of prioritizing Europe while holding in the Pacific.]

6. Biddle, Tami Davis. "Democratic Leaders and Strategies of Coalition Warfare: Churchill and Roosevelt in World War II," in Hal Brands, ed., *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023), pp. 569-592. **(BOOK)**

[Biddle explores key differences between totalitarian and democratic states and examines Anglo-American strategic debates as well as disagreements over war termination and the desired political end-state of the war in Europe.]

7. O'Brien, Phillips. "East versus West in the Defeat of Nazi Germany." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. vol. 23, no. 2 (June 2000). Pages 89-113. **(Leganto)**

[O'Brien challenges the view that Soviet ground forces were largely responsible for the defeat of Nazi Germany. He highlights the importance of American Lend-Lease aid to the Red Army and the powerful strategic effects of the Anglo-American bombing of the German homeland.]

8. Harrison, Mark. "The Soviet Union: The Defeated Victor," in Mark Harrison, ed., *The Economics of World War II: Six Great Powers in International Comparison*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 268-301. **(Leganto)**

[This study examines the mobilization of Soviet resources for the war effort and the contribution of the Soviet Union to the success of the Grand Alliance.]

VII. THE EARLY COLD WAR: NATIONAL SECURITY, IDEOLOGY, AND DOMESTIC POLITICS, 1945-1953

General: The following three cases all deal with the Cold War. Because this was a complex, global affair, it is impossible to cover every historical detail. Accordingly, the next three cases will emphasize U.S., Soviet, and Chinese conceptions of strategy and how they related to the global balance of power at various points during the Cold War, and how they evolved in response to changes in both international and domestic politics.

The Grand Alliance of World War II unraveled because the United States and the Soviet Union had divergent ideas about war termination, the division of the defeated nations and their empires, and the postwar international order. These differences, combined with the end of the US atomic monopoly and communist victory in the Chinese Civil War, contributed to the outbreak of war in Korea. Among other important things, this case gives students the opportunity to explore the Chinese Communist Party's victory in the civil war under the leadership of Mao Zedong and whether the United States could have done more to prevent it.

This case study also offers an excellent opportunity to examine the role of leadership, as Franklin Roosevelt's death brought his inexperienced and out-of-the-loop vice-president Harry S. Truman to power. Truman's subsequent dealings with the Soviets were more confrontational than cooperative. Joseph Stalin saw Eastern Europe as a buffer and Germany as a source of reparations for a nation decimated by the Nazi invasion. Truman and his allies, especially Churchill, saw Soviet domination of Eastern Europe as a threat to the West, or in Churchill's famous speech, as an Iron Curtain dividing the war-devastated continent.

As World War II ended, the United States attempted to engineer a world where great power competition that had precipitated both world wars would no longer exist. The U.S. created an international order to promote economic growth and mechanisms to arbitrate conflict rather than engage in the costly business of war. Truman sought to rein in defense spending, but even his cuts yielded the largest force in American history. The Soviet Union rejected the U.S.-dominated world order and resumed the ideological struggle of the prewar years while pursuing traditional Russian foreign policy aims in Turkey, Iran, China, and Korea. Rather than create a lasting great-power peace, such as the Congress of Vienna after Napoleon's defeat, the United States and the Soviet Union waged a new great power competition, the Cold War. During the Cold War both sides engaged each other indirectly through limited wars while managing a new set of technologies, nuclear weapons, whose use threatened global rather than simply national destruction.

The United States began postwar planning even before it entered World War II. U.S. officials focused on the development of institutions and arrangements that would rebuild the global economy and enable the reconstruction of nations devastated by the war in Europe and Asia. At the Bretton Woods conference, the U.S. and its allies, including the Soviet Union, created a postwar economic order based upon stable exchange rates and a recognition that economic autarky was a threat to peace and democratic governments. At Dumbarton Oaks and the San Francisco Conference, a charter was drawn up for a new United Nations, seeking to avoid the limitations of its predecessor, the League of Nations. Stalin refused to join the United Nations unless the members of the Security Council were granted veto power – a concession that brought the Cold War great power competition into the United Nations and complicated its efforts to peacefully resolve interstate conflicts.

For both the US and USSR, the immediate postwar years prompted significant reassessment. The post-war world largely subverted Soviet expectations. Instead of renewing the imperialist conflict over colonies, resources, and markets that Marxist-Leninist theory claimed had already produced two world wars, the capitalist powers remained united and embarked upon unprecedented political, economic, and military cooperation. Moreover, instead of returning to a state of economic depression, the West enjoyed an economic boom that lasted until the 1970s.

The Soviets' flawed assessment exacerbated the communist regime's fear and paranoia and caused it to reject any cooperation with the West. These actions prompted the first US reassessment of its postwar strategy in 1946, producing George Kennan's vision of containment. For Kennan, containment was a simple strategy that required U.S. leaders abandon their fruitless policy of negotiating with a Soviet regime that was, by ideological conviction, uninterested in peace with the capitalist world. Kennan did not advocate confrontation – U.S. military action was only required for the preservation of key regions including the U.S. homeland, Western Europe, Japan, and the Middle East for its oil resources. Otherwise, Americans need only keep the USSR from expanding and allow communism to collapse of its own accord. The 1947 Truman Doctrine with its defense of Greek democracy against communist insurgency was the initial instantiation of containment in US policy.

U.S. plans quickly ran into economic difficulties. The nations of Europe lacked the foreign exchange to pay for their reconstruction, and drought plus a harsh winter (1946-1947) wiped out their remaining supplies and savings. U.S. officials realized that hungry people trying to rebuild their lives amidst unprecedented destruction might turn towards communism as a potential solution to their problems. Rebuilding European industry so that they might earn dollars through exports and become dependable US trading partners proved nearly impossible given the level of destruction wrought by the war. Fixing the issues required the 1948 Marshall Plan, an unprecedented display of generosity in which the US subsidized its allies with massive infusions of both dollars and goods. Buoyed by U.S. taxpayer dollars, the American bases in Europe—where GIs spent freely and Europeans found steady employment—gradually helped close the "dollar gap," the difference between what Europeans possessed and what they needed to buy U.S.-made goods. The gap's legacy would continue shaping American perceptions of Europe long after it disappeared.

By 1948, the Soviets finished crushing the non-communist governments within their sphere and blockaded access to West Berlin. The following year, the communists triumphed in the Chinese Civil War, and the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb years before the United States expected it. War now became a distinct possibility, but the United States was unprepared. President Truman's fixation on cutting the budget, combined with bitter interservice rivalry, poisoned civil-military relations. Congress was hostile to extending further economic assistance to Europe, much less Japan, which had not received aid under the Marshall Plan.

Kennan had no answer to these problems and lost the confidence of the Truman Administration. Paul Nitze, his replacement at the State Department, gave containment teeth. For Nitze, the Soviet Union was an active threat driven by an ideological imperative to expand across Western Europe and the Eurasian landmass. Nitze and his colleagues in the State Department and Pentagon crafted NSC-68 as a response to Kennan. This remarkable document, the product of a committee rather than an individual, argued that the best course of action for the U.S. was a massive military buildup of both nuclear and conventional forces, including the yet unproven

hydrogen or thermonuclear bomb. Such military expansion would eliminate the hope for a balanced U.S. budget but would promote economic expansion through the stimulus of government spending, as occurred during World War II. The resulting economic growth would shrink the debt as a percentage of the overall economy, even if the deficit grew. President Truman, who held distinctly old-fashioned views about public finance and distrusted the military to spend money wisely, originally shelved NSC-68 and made only modest spending increases.

Among the preconditions for NSC-68 was the August 1949 Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb. The end of the American nuclear monopoly yielded a profound change in the American polity, one in which it became clear that technology was not solely an American advantage. In turn, NSC-68 posited that the development of thermonuclear weapons, a leap forward in destructive power, would become essential to the arsenals of both nations. For the USSR, the rapid assembly and demonstration of a nuclear weapon demonstrated the power of the Soviet system as well as the nation's potential equality with the US. For Americans, the Soviet detonation accelerated a domestic Red Scare. At the same time, NSC-68's militarization rekindled fears that the US might become a "garrison state" in which specialists on violence would become the dominant force.

Ironically, despite believing in the centrality of Europe for the future of the U.S., it was in Asia where the Cold War became hot. Stalin approved Kim Il Sung's plans for a North Korean invasion of South Korea, which took place in June 1950. The Korean War, which occurred far from the Cold War's ostensibly central front along the Iron Curtain, ended the first phase of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. Still, not even the outbreak of the Korean War convinced Truman to put the U.S. on a permanent war footing, since General Douglas MacArthur's brilliant landing at Inchon in September suggested that the war would end by Christmas. However, China's massive military intervention on behalf of North Korea in November 1950 dramatically transformed the Korean War into a dangerous regional and potentially global conflict.

This case also highlights the fragile nature of civil-military relations. General MacArthur repeatedly clashed with President Truman by advocating for escalations, including nuclear strikes and deploying Nationalist troops. When Truman rejected these strategies, MacArthur publicly criticized him, leading to his dismissal for insubordination. Ultimately, this rift exposed the difficulties of maintaining civilian control during wartime.

The Korean War marked a pivotal shift in American Cold War strategy. Shaped by Paul Nitze's stark assessment of Soviet ambitions in NSC-68, U.S. foreign policy expanded globally to confront of the Soviet Union and communist China. To contain communism in Asia, Washington positioned Japan as a key regional bulwark. Furthermore, the Korean War prompted the United States to extend its security network beyond Europe and NATO. Through regional pacts such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), the US cemented its role as the global guarantor against communist expansion. Yet, this global treaty network often blinded Washington to the fact that the Korean conflict was not just a Cold War chessboard, but a violent byproduct of the messy decolonization process reshaping the post-war world.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. What difference did the existence of atomic weapons make for the policy and strategy of the United States and its communist adversaries from 1945 to 1950?

2. In 1945, Stalin and most American strategic leaders expected a cooperative relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States to continue in the postwar era. Why was that expectation not fulfilled?

3. Was preventative nuclear war an option for the U.S. during the period of its atomic monopoly?

4. What role did interservice rivalry play in the creation of an American strategy to address the Soviet threat?

5. Which was more of a cause for the Cold War: Stalin's actions in Eastern Europe, American possession of nuclear weapons, or economic disruption in both Europe and Asia?

6. Within the span of this case study, which side did the better job of assessing the other as an adversary, the United States or the Soviet Union?

7. American thinkers often see the United States as Thucydides' Athens: a dynamic, democratic, commercial power. Did the United States after World War II do a better job of handling the burdens of empire than Athens?

8. The United States entered Cold War alliances with Japan and much of Germany. What best accounts for the realignment of the two main Axis powers after the Second World War – American policy and strategy, Soviet policy and strategy, or German and Japanese actions?

9. The victorious great powers at the end of the two world wars could not agree on a mutually satisfactory peace settlement, while after the Napoleonic Wars they could. What made the difference?

10. The Marshall Plan did more to divide Europe than to reconstruct it. Do you agree?

11. Did Stalin and Mao make a strategic blunder in backing North Korea's invasion of the South?

12. Did the United States make a strategic blunder by going to war in Korea?

13. How might the U.S. have acted without alliances in this period? For example, without either the Marshall Plan or the creation of NATO, what might the U.S. have done on its own to maintain its international position?

14. Was there anything that the US might have done that would have made international control of atomic weapons a more viable option?

15. Which was more detrimental to the American war effort in Korea: military leaders' failure to comprehend political objectives, or civilian leaders' failure to understand the limitations of military force?

16. How did U.S. military and civilian leaders reconcile conflicting views of military strategy and budget priorities between 1945 and 1950?

17. Why did American atomic strategy evolve so rapidly between 1945 and 1950, and what were the implications for strategic stability?

18. Why did American efforts to impose a unified vision of postwar order repeatedly clash with both allies and adversaries from 1945–1950?

19. Was there more that the United States could have done to prevent a Chinese Communist Party victory in the Chinese Civil War?

20. Did the United States miss opportunities to drive a wedge into the Sino-Soviet relationship?

21. What lessons can be derived from examining the onset of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and how can those lessons be applied to chart a course in today's security competition with China?

Readings:

1. Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History.* New York: Basic Books, 2017. Pages 19-259. **BOOK**

[Westad reframes the Cold War not simply as a U.S.–Soviet rivalry but as a global ideological struggle rooted in the transformations of the early 20th century. For strategy students, these chapters emphasize how strategic choices are shaped by ideological commitments and historical contexts beyond traditional military calculations.]

2. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers.* New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Pages 347-372. **BOOK**

[Kennedy explains how the United States and the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as the two dominant global powers and argues that their conflicting political systems and strategic goals made the Cold War a near certainty.]

3. Leffler, Melvyn. "The emergence of an American grand strategy, 1945-1952." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad. Pages 67-89. **(Selected Readings)**

[Leffler argues that U.S. Cold War grand strategy was shaped more by systemic insecurity and political ideology than by reactive containment. The article stresses the integration of economic, military, and ideological tools into a holistic grand strategy, challenging students to consider how long-term planning and institutional momentum shape strategic outcomes.]

4. Pechatnov, Vladimir O. “The Soviet Union and the World, 1944-1953.” In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad. Pages 90-111. **(Selected Readings)**

[Pechatnov presents an internal Soviet view of Cold War diplomacy, focusing on the Kremlin’s efforts to navigate both ideological imperatives and geopolitical constraints. The reading highlights the complex interplay between domestic pressures and strategic behavior in authoritarian regimes.]

5. Hitchcock, William. “The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West.” In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad. Pages 154-174. **(Selected Readings)**

[Hitchcock's analysis of the Marshall Plan presents it as both an economic recovery initiative and a bold geopolitical strategy. The article unpacks tensions between strategic generosity and conditional sovereignty, showing how aid served as an instrument of containment.]

6. Toprani, Anand. "‘Our Efforts Have Degenerated into a Competition for Dollars’. The ‘Revolt of the Admirals’, NSC-68, and the Political Economy of the Cold War." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 30, no. 4 (2020). Pages 681-706. **(Leganto)**

[Toprani, a professor in the Strategy & Policy department, shows how resource constraints and inter-service rivalry eroded strategic coherence, turning high-level planning into a competition for appropriations. This reading highlights the material limits of grand strategy and reveals how domestic politics and institutional interests shape strategic execution.]

7. Wells, Samuel F., Jr. "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat." *International Security* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1979). Pages 116-158. **(Leganto)**

[Wells analyzes NSC-68 as both a strategic document and a rhetorical call to arms, exploring how assumptions about Soviet intentions influenced U.S. capabilities, planning, and alliance formation. This reading challenges students to critically assess how threat perception and strategic imagination shape defense planning.]

8. Kaplan, Fred. *The Bomb: Presidents, Generals, and the Secret History of Nuclear War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020. Pages 4-30. **BOOK**

[Kaplan describes how the U.S. developed its first plans for nuclear war in the early stages of the Cold War, demonstrating that early nuclear strategy was driven by a mix of fear, uncertainty, and the belief that a large-scale strike could deter Soviet aggression. This chapter highlights the lack

of civilian control and planning in early nuclear decision-making, which set the stage for conflicts between military and civilian leaders over how to manage nuclear weapons.]

9. Rosenberg, David Alan. "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision." *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 1 (1979). Pages 62–87. **(Leganto)**

[Rosenberg examines the internal debates within the U.S. government that led to the decision to develop the hydrogen bomb. It underscores the strategic dilemma posed by Soviet nuclear advances and raises questions about deterrence theory, escalation control, and the costs of technological overreach.]

10. Chen, Jian. *Mao's China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. Pages 49-117. **BOOK**

[Chen provides students with the Chinese perspective on the Cold War and the evolution of the PRC's policy goals and strategies, emphasizing the importance of ideology and domestic politics.]

11. House, J. M. (2012). *A Military History of the Cold War, 1944–1962*, University of Oklahoma Press. Pages 133-208. **BOOK**

[These two chapters, on the Chinese Civil War and the Korean War, provide students with the narrative of operations and events that are important in this case.]

12. X [George F. Kennan]. (1947). "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 25, no 4. Pages 566–582. **(Selected Readings)**

[This article by a Foreign Service Officer and Russia expert had a remarkable impact on U.S. policy and strategy in the emerging Cold War. Kennan provided an influential assessment of the Soviet Union, the key concept of "containment" for thwarting Soviet strategy, and a "theory of victory" for bringing about the mellowing or breakup of the Soviet system.]

13. Primary Source Documents: Soviet Assessments of the United States in the Early Cold War. **(Selected Readings)**

[The Novikov telegram can be read as the Soviet counterpart to Kennan's "X" article. It was drafted by the Soviet ambassador in Washington after Kennan wrote his long telegram but before the "X" article was published and depicts a United States intent on world domination. The Zhdanov report to the Communist Information Bureau, the successor organization to the Communist International, emphasizes the ideological differences between the United States and the Soviet Union and the imperative of containing U.S. imperialism.]

14. "NSC-68: A Report to the National Security Council." *Naval War College Review*, vol. 27 (May-June 1975). Pages 51-108. **(Selected Readings)**

[NSC-68 was drafted in response to President Truman's request for advice regarding nuclear policy in view of the likelihood that the Soviet Union had successfully tested an atomic weapon.]

VIII. THE MIDDLE COLD WAR: U.S., SOVIET, AND CHINESE COMPETITION IN THE THIRD WORLD, 1953-1968

General: The second case study in the Cold War trilogy examines the intersection of decolonization and superpower rivalry, including the war in Vietnam and a near-war over Cuba. While in the early Cold War study students examined the Winning the Peace and Preparing for War course theme, this case study will cover Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment, and Civil-Military Relations and the Institutional Dimensions of Strategy. These course themes allow students to evaluate how war termination in Korea and in the First Indochina War reshaped the policies and strategies of the major belligerents. How did the influence of the great powers – the United States, PRC, and USSR – interact with the situation on the battlefield and the objectives of the Koreans and Vietnamese to shape the outcomes of these wars? What lessons did the great powers learn based on their involvement in these wars, and how did they reassess their political objectives and strategies in the aftermath? Finally, how did tensions between civilian and military leaders shape this era, and what lessons can be drawn regarding the impact of civil–military relations on strategic success?

For the United States, the war in Korea had been a peripheral operation suitable for a maritime power, but for the communist adversaries, it was a land war to protect their continental borders. The Chinese paid a heavy price in blood and treasure while Joseph Stalin sought to protract the war at minimal cost to the USSR. Negotiations over war termination stalled until the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953 removed the one insuperable obstacle to reaching an agreement. In 1954, the long war for the fate of Indochina between France and Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese communists was decided in Geneva, and the resulting divided Vietnam reflected the interests of the Americans, Soviets, and Chinese more so than it did the battlefield realities on the ground. It also laid the foundation for the subsequent American war in Vietnam. Students should evaluate the conditions under which war termination leads to a "better state of peace."

In the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev won a brief power struggle after Stalin's death. His denunciation of Stalin = at the 20th Party Congress in 1956 stunned fellow communists and ushered in a period of instability in the "bloc," as Soviet bloc states grappled with the consequences of Khrushchev's disclosure of Stalin's crimes. Mao Zedong and the Chinese communists were furious about the so-called "Secret Speech," and feared the consequences of de-Stalinization for their own rule in China. Students should examine leadership styles in the communist world and the political and strategic implications of different personalities. To what extent did Sino-Soviet hostilities reflect the personalities of Mao and Khrushchev? To what extent was the Sino-Soviet rivalry an ideological contest over competing theories of revolution, and to what extent was it grounded in geopolitical realities?

The 1957 launch of the Sputnik satellite provoked a serious reassessment of U.S. scientific and technological capabilities. Scientific research became an urgent national security concern, as Americans assumed that the success of Sputnik demonstrated Soviet technological superiority. American intelligence estimates of Soviet nuclear capabilities were wildly off base, ranging upwards of hundreds of inter-continental ballistic missiles at a time when the USSR only had four ICBMs (as would later become clear with U2 overflights of Soviet territory). Khrushchev's own bellicose rhetoric, claiming that Soviet factories were pumping out missiles "like sausages," only compounded US fears, as did his willingness to pursue nuclear

brinkmanship in the Suez crisis. John F. Kennedy campaigned for the presidency on the issue of this supposed "missile gap" between the US and USSR. Once in the White House, Kennedy quickly learned that the missile gap was a myth, or rather, that there *was* a missile gap, but it was dramatically in the U.S.'s favor. Nevertheless, he continued with the defense buildup as planned. Students should examine the Civil-Military Relations and Institutional Dimension of Strategy course theme to understand why this course of action was pursued even as the intelligence estimates were shown to be wildly exaggerated.

This case study offers an excellent opportunity to examine the Instruments of National Power in the nuclear age. During the Eisenhower Presidency, the administration tried to rein in defense spending by relying on two extreme instruments for coercion. The first was the use of covert action, which seemed to pay off in 1953 and 1954, when CIA-backed coups toppled leaders in Iran and Guatemala pursuing policies contrary to U.S. interests. The second was the doctrine of "massive retaliation," whereby the United States promised to respond to future provocations such as the Korean War not by a steady escalation of force but rather the application of overwhelming violence at the very start of a conflict – up to and including the use of thermonuclear weapons.

American defense analysts devised nuclear policy and doctrine with the aim of deterrence, and their debates reflected uncertainty about the USSR's nuclear arsenal and strategic thinking. The strategic dilemma of Berlin was at the center of these debates. While the United States sought to protect West Germany and West Berlin from Soviet aggression, the Soviets desperately sought to stanch the flow of migration from East to West Berlin, and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 served as the most literal manifestation of the "Iron Curtain." The Kennedy administration's search for a "flexible response" was a reaction to frustration with "massive retaliation," which many U.S. military and civilian defense analysts did not consider a realistic strategy, particularly as the Soviet thermonuclear arsenal grew. One option was to build up conventional forces in Western Europe to deter a Warsaw Pact invasion, but this would have exacerbated the US balance-of-payments deficit, potentially leading to unsustainable US dollar and gold outflows under the Bretton Woods system, which pegged the dollar to gold.

While US policymakers and strategists continued to view Europe as the primary theater of the Cold War, events elsewhere kept drawing their attention back to the Third World. In 1961, Khrushchev delivered a speech lauding "wars of national liberation" in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Although his message was likely aimed just as much at the Chinese as it was at the Americans, the Washington defense establishment viewed it as a direct challenge. The Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations embraced covert operations as a means of containing communism in the Third World on the cheap. Students should evaluate whether the short-term success of these operations led to long-term stability, or whether they ultimately undermined US and global security. With each successive wave of decolonization, the US-USSR-PRC rivalry added an international and ideological dimension to what might have otherwise been isolated civil wars in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The 1959 Cuban revolution and the development of the Cuban-Soviet alliance confronted the United States with a direct challenge inside the Western Hemisphere, long considered Washington's exclusive sphere of influence. As Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara consolidated the revolution and tacked to the left, they sought the support of the Soviet Union as

the only great power capable of protecting their regime against US hostility. The radicalization of the Cuban revolution drove many of Castro's former comrades into opposition, many of whom migrated to the U.S. The Cuban exile community in Miami became a powerful domestic political constituency, and the CIA sponsored an exile-led invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. The operation was flawed from the outset, and President Kennedy's refusal to supply air support doomed the exiles to capture or worse. In the aftermath, the Cuban population rallied around the regime, and the United States suffered a blow to its reputation as the leader of the free world. The most profound consequence of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, however, was Khrushchev's decision to station nuclear missiles in Cuba.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest the world has ever come to nuclear annihilation. The crisis pitted Khrushchev against Kennedy, Khrushchev against Castro, and Kennedy against his own advisers, particularly the generals. This offers students an excellent opportunity to examine alliance dynamics between great powers and smaller states, as Khrushchev pursued negotiations with Kennedy without advancing Cuban demands or even bothering to inform Castro. Moreover, it provides students with a window into civil-military relations in the United States, and the implications for nuclear policy and doctrine of these institutional arrangements. The outcome of the crisis, despite forcing the United States to tolerate the existence of the Cuban revolution, ultimately deepened the rift dividing the PRC and USSR.

Concurrent with the Cuban Missile Crisis was the Sino-Indian War of 1962, a dramatic escalation of border skirmishes that had begun after the 1959 uprising in Tibet. China and India had both attended the 1955 Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, and had declared their support for the conference's foundational principles of peaceful coexistence, non-aggression, and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. In practice, it proved difficult for decolonizing states to operationalize these principles, as the former European colonial powers had drawn borders often with the express intent to "divide and conquer." Postcolonial states proved resistant to redrawing those borders, and despite rhetorical fealty to the "spirit of Bandung," the primacy of national interests and the heightened appeal of nationalism frequently took precedence over Third World solidarity.

The International Dimension theme demonstrates the impact of geography and coalitions on wars and competitions. Geography challenged the United States and its allies by affording logistical and sanctuary advantages to the North Vietnamese communists. The making and breaking of coalitions played a major role in determining the outcome of the wars in Southeast Asia. Communist alliances alternately restrained Hanoi and bolstered its firepower, while the United States faced international challenges around the globe even as it fought to contain communism in Southeast Asia. The breakdown of the partnership between Saigon and Washington paved the way for the communist victory in Vietnam. Students will examine how the Nixon administration was able to "operationalize" the Sino-Soviet split through triangular diplomacy, transforming the international environment with significant consequences for the Second and Third Indochina Wars.

The Cultural and Social Dimensions of Strategy theme plays an important role during this period. How important was ideology in explaining great-power rivalry and competition during the Cold War? Did shared ideology strengthen the Sino-Soviet partnership or weaken it? How

did domestic politics shape US, Soviet, and Chinese foreign policy? How did cultural values and social norms influence the development of policy and strategy?

The case study also introduces civil-military relations theory. This theory examines how interactions among civilian authorities, military professionals, and society shape the formulation and execution of strategy, influence strategic adaptability, and condition political support in war. Understanding the responsibilities of political and military leaders for the formulation of strategy and its implementation in the theater remains a critical requirement for national security professionals.

While the last case dealt with Mao as a political actor, this case adds Mao as a theorist of insurgency and unconventional warfare. Well before World War II, he produced a series of writings on how weaker actors can use irregular warfare and protraction as tools to victory. During the Cold War and since, revolutionaries throughout the developing world have seized on his ideas and used them as weapons against imperial powers and domestic regimes alike. Governments in power were forced to devise ways to counter and defeat Maoist-style insurgencies, with mixed success.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Did nuclear weapons make it easier or more difficult to resolve crises without incurring the risk of war?

2. Given the Athenian experience in Sicily, Napoleon's experience in the Iberian Peninsula, and the US experience in Vietnam, why is opening a new theater of war strategically challenging?

3. Why did the United States fail in Vietnam while it achieved its basic political objective in Korea?

4. Could the United States have done more to exploit the Sino-Soviet split?

5. Did it make strategic sense for the United States to extend a policy of containment to Indochina and make it a new military theater in the larger Cold War?

6. Considering the Peloponnesian War, the First World War, and the wars in Korea and Indochina, what are the ingredients for strategic success in pursuing war termination?

7. What were the most strategically significant disadvantages facing the United States as it sought allies in the Third World?

8. What were the most strategically significant disadvantages facing the Soviet Union as it sought allies in the Third World?

9. Could the United States have done a better job of managing its relations with the Third World?

10. Which Cold War great power did a better job adapting and reassessing its strategy during the period of this case study – the United States, the USSR, or the PRC?

11. Domestic politics explain the strategic reassessments of all three great Cold War powers. Do you agree?

12. What are the most important elements of a successful insurgency?

13. What is the appropriate role of an external power supporting a local or regional counterinsurgency effort?

14. Was the Sino-Soviet split fundamentally about personalities, ideology, or geopolitical interests?

15. How important was ideology as a factor in the Cold War competition among the US, USSR, and PRC?

16. How effective were covert operations as a strategy for achieving US political objectives in the Third World?

17. Did Mao formulate a unique revolutionary strategy, or was he instead repeating ideas already present in Clausewitz and Sun Tzu?

18. How can a government in power best combat a Maoist insurgency?

19. Considering the First World War, the Second World War, and the conflicts in Korea and Indochina, what is the proper relationship between civilian policymakers and military strategists?

20. Considering the conflicts and crises that occurred during the period of this case study, does the PRC have a distinct "way of war"?

21. What lessons does this case study hold for contemporary policymakers and strategists?

Readings:

1. Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. Pages 261-363. **BOOK**

[Westad provides an overview of the time period of this case study, focusing on developments in the Third World within the overarching context of US and Soviet abiding interests in Europe.]

2. *Seeing Red: The Development of Maoist Thought on Insurgency*. Readings #7-#10. **(Selected Readings)**

[Bradford Lee, Professor Emeritus in the Strategy and Policy Department, selected these extracts from Mao's writings on political revolution and irregular warfare, including his famous *On Protracted War*. Articles #7-#10 are particularly important in conveying Mao's theory of revolution.]

3. Asselin, Pierre. *Vietnam's American War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pages 47-233. **BOOK**

[Asselin gives the North Vietnamese communist perspective on the war in Indochina, enhancing student comprehension of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's policy objectives and strategies.]

4. Chen, Jian. *Mao's China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. Pages 118-237. **BOOK**

[Chen provides students with the Chinese perspective on the Cold War and the evolution of the PRC's policy goals and strategies, emphasizing the importance of ideology and domestic politics.]

5. Kaplan, Fred. *The Bomb: Presidents, Generals, and the Secret History of Nuclear War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020. Pages 31-120. **BOOK**

[This reading sheds light on the institutional dimension of strategy, especially civ/mil relations, and the instruments of national power in the nuclear age.]

6. House, Jonathan M. *A Military History of the Cold War, 1944-1962.* Norman: University of Oklahoma, Press, 2012. Pages 415-440. **BOOK**

[House provides a succinct overview of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which prepares students for the historical role-playing simulation.]

7. Ulrich, Marybeth P. "Civil-Military Relations for Strategy and Policy," Strategy and Policy Department Primer Series, January 2026. **(Selected Readings)**

[Professor Ulrich examines how interaction among civilian authorities, military professionals, and society shape the formulation and execution of strategy, influence strategic adaptability, and condition political support in war.]

IX. THE LATE COLD WAR: FROM DÉTENTE TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, 1969-1991

General: This case study examines how the Cold War ended. Beginning with détente, a general reduction in tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it continues into the collapse of détente and a renewal of rivalry under the presidency of Ronald Reagan. It then turns to the Soviet Union's major internal and external challenges in the 1980s, and then final end of the Cold War, followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It asks why the Cold War, unlike many other great power rivalries, ended relatively peacefully. Did the United States triumph because of a patient U.S. strategy of containment? Or do Soviet structural problems and ineffective leadership explain the outcome? In other words, do the choices of individual actors' matter, or are they outweighed by power imbalances, structural weaknesses, and ideological blinders?

This case begins as the United States sought to reduce tension with the Soviets and extricate itself from its disastrous intervention in Vietnam. As its architects in the United States explained, détente aimed not to end the Cold War but to stabilize it. Détente envisioned a "structure of peace" whereby great powers would compete peacefully to gain from cooperation rather than confrontation. From the U.S. perspective, détente meant normalizing relations with the communist nations in exchange for concessions on key national interests. Through the application of sticks and carrots, the United States hoped to reduce Soviet and Chinese support for North Vietnam, thereby allowing the United States to withdraw from South Vietnam.

Every nation had its own rationale for embracing détente. Lyndon Johnson's administration tried in vain to induce the Soviet Union and China to help the United States withdraw from Vietnam. After 1969, however, the situation changed. First, the Federal Republic of Germany decided to normalize its relations with its eastern neighbors. Unless the U.S. joined this process, it risked becoming isolated within its own alliance. More importantly, divisions within the communist world made détente possible. In 1969, the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China had a border clash that almost escalated into all-out war. The Soviet Union was so concerned with the Chinese threat that, according to one of Henry Kissinger's aides, the Soviet Union floated the idea of the United States standing by while the Soviet Union obliterated China's nuclear-weapons facilities. The U.S. rejected this proposal, seeing in the confrontation an opportunity. Through a process of "triangular diplomacy," the U.S. tried to play its two foes against one another for diplomatic gains. Since the U.S. had to restrain defense spending in the wake of Vietnam, arms control--managing the growth in U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals--soon became an emphasis of détente. The Soviet Union had long sought equality of status with the United States. It was willing to make accommodations in exchange for recognition of the post-World War II status quo in Eastern Europe and greater access to Western markets and technology. China meanwhile needed to end its diplomatic isolation in the wake of the Sino-Soviet rift. U.S. support for China might dissuade the Soviet Union from taking military action against China.

Détente unraveled in the second half of the 1970s. The United States hoped to enforce détente through "linkage": U.S. concessions in one sphere would be matched by the Soviet Union in another. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union's clients did not simply heed the guidance of

their patron and instead acted in their own self-interest, undermining U.S. interests. The beginning of the end came in Angola in 1975, where the Soviets supported the deployment of Cuban troops to counter forces backed by the United States, South Africa, France, and China. From the U.S. perspective, détente looked like a one-way street that enabled Communist expansion. The Soviets also soured on détente once the promised gains from greater economic trade evaporated. The 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment punished the Soviet regime for not allowing the emigration of Soviet Jews by withholding most-favored-nation trading status. This legislation signified the growing importance of human rights in international affairs, which complicated the operation of détente. Finally, Mao Zedong was furious that the United States had exploited China to seek an accommodation with Moscow.

Between 1975 and 1989, a remarkable turnaround occurred in American fortunes. In 1975, Saigon fell to North Vietnamese forces. During the final communist offensive, the United States refused to offer air support for South Vietnam. Domestically, the U.S. suffered from inflation arising from the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system in 1971 and the energy crisis starting in 1973. U.S. foreign policy was hamstrung by stagflation and the Watergate scandal. The Soviet Union, bolstered by oil revenues, was seemingly on the march, especially in the Third World. Meanwhile, Third World countries nationalized key industries such as oil upon which the developed West depended. The collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran was an especially grievous blow, as Iran was a major oil producer, and the U.S. relied on it to safeguard Western interests in the Middle East. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 not only seemed to presage a Soviet move against the Middle East but also signaled the final collapse of détente.

Finally, the military balance seemed to shift decisively in favor of the Soviet Union, which in the 1970s added parity in strategic (nuclear) weapons to its quantitative superiority in conventional weapons. Strategic parity, U.S. hawks warned, would allow the Soviet Union to coerce U.S. allies in Europe and Asia since they lacked the ability to match the Soviet Union in conventional forces and risked total destruction if they used nuclear weapons, which had always been central to NATO's military strategy.

By 1989, the situation had completely reversed. The United States, through harsh monetary policies, managed to end stagflation. The information-technology revolution transformed the economy of the West. These new technologies combined with the largest peacetime defense budgets in American history to shift the military balance back in favor of the U.S. and its allies. On the other side of the Iron Curtain, the Soviet Union's economy staggered under the dual shocks of declining oil prices and a moribund economy. Efforts to reform the economy only heightened its dysfunction, and Communist leaders' growing dependence on the West discouraged them from using force to repress opposition groups in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union was also bogged down fighting or supporting costly guerilla wars in Southeast Asia, Africa, Central America, and Afghanistan. China, which had warmed further to the United States following Mao's death in 1976, even supported the U.S. assistance program to the Afghan guerrillas fighting the Soviet-backed regime. Finally, the U.S. advantage in the "revolution in military affairs" convinced Soviet military leaders that they could not win a conventional war against NATO and enabled moderate Soviet leaders to press for arms reduction and dismantling the Soviet empire.

How should national-security practitioners understand the reversal in U.S. fortunes between the fall of Saigon and the end of the Cold War? Was the United States stronger in the 1970s, and the Soviet Union weaker, than they appeared? Or was it a validation of President Ronald Reagan's rejection of détente – indeed of containment as a whole – and his stated policy of rolling back Soviet gains? Reagan told his chief foreign policy adviser in 1978 that his strategy for the Cold War was simple: "We win, they lose."[7]

Reagan was the beneficiary of excellent timing. His administration capitalized on investments, particularly during the Carter Administration, that yielded improved military capabilities. By the mid-1980s, the United States and its allies in Europe and the Pacific were now confident that they could successfully repel a Soviet military offensive through conventional means and strike at the Soviet Union on its flanks with naval forces. Reagan and his team were convinced that the U.S. defense buildup would persuade the Soviet Union that it could not compete and must negotiate an end to the Cold War. Although the U.S. military was focused on warfighting (to the point where the U.S. Navy adopted a Maritime Strategy that explicitly undermined the Soviet Union's nuclear deterrent) the Reagan Administration always considered its strategy of "pressure" to be an inducement to negotiation.

Reagan himself understood that his confrontational rhetoric had gone too far in late 1983, when for several weeks the Soviet leadership wondered if the United States was considering a surprise nuclear attack. Reagan, with access to high-level intelligence on the thinking of Soviet leaders, reacted by offering to return to diplomacy. Reagan's greatest contribution to ending the Cold War was perhaps enabling the actions of the man who inadvertently destroyed the Soviet Union: Mikhail Gorbachev. He knew full well the extent of Soviet economic dysfunction. The dynamism of the Soviet economy had peaked in the 1960s, but the country failed to make the transition from extensive to intensive economic growth. In other words, the Soviet economy produced large amounts of industrial goods, but productivity stalled, meaning that Soviet production remained inefficient. Additionally, the Soviet Union failed to develop light industry, meaning that living standards, and therefore productivity, remained low. The gradual decline of oil prices in the 1980s removed an important support of the Soviet system. Gorbachev wanted to revolutionize the Soviet economic system by delegating authority downward to state-owned firms, but he risked undermining the legitimacy of the Soviet regime if he failed. Conservatives had blocked would-be reformers in the past by pointing to the U.S. threat. Gorbachev could overcome this resistance by using Reagan's determination to end the Cold War by negotiation.

Students should address the issues surrounding war termination and examine how they apply to the Cold War. Did the United States create a "better state of peace," or was there more that U.S. leaders could have done to effectively incorporate the defeated powers (Russia, the former Soviet states, and Eastern Europe) into the international system? Finally, did the United States end up creating a more-formidable foe in China by building it up as a counterweight to the Soviet Union? The Reagan Administration, and the U.S. Navy in particular, was a keen advocate of transferring advanced military technology to China to draw Soviet forces away from Europe. The Joint Chiefs of Staff warned that these transfers would have little immediate impact on the military balance but would have profound long-term consequences by undermining U.S.

[1] Melvyn P. Leffler, "Ronald Reagan and the Cold War: What Mattered Most," *Texas National Security Review* 1:3 (2018): 76-89.

alliances in the Pacific and speeding up China's military modernization. If the natural state of great-power competition is that it never ends but merely moves in cycles oscillating from confrontation to cooperation, is the worst indictment of a strategy that it succeeds too well?

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. How did the Cold War change the United States and the Soviet Union?

2. To what extent was the Cold War a "war" as defined by Clausewitz?

3. What are the lessons for U.S. leaders from the end of the Cold War?

4. Did the Cold War end peacefully because containment succeeded?

5. Was the Cold War fundamentally an economic struggle?

6. How significant was military power, including nuclear weapons, in determining the course and eventual outcome of the Cold War?

7. Did the United States win the Cold War or did the Soviet Union lose it?

8. Who played a greater role in ending the Cold War, Ronald Reagan or Mikhail Gorbachev?

9. How might the United States have lost the Cold War?

10. Should the United States have allied with the Soviet Union against China?

11. Does the failure of *détente* prove that "peaceful co-existence" with rival great powers is impossible?

12. How should the Soviet Union have reacted to the growth in U.S. power in the late 1970s and early 1980s?

13. Did Gorbachev make a mistake trying to reform the Soviet economy? If so, what were his alternatives?

14. Could Soviet leaders have pursued a different grand strategy that would have prevented the Soviet Union's defeat in the Cold War?

15. Considering the end of the Cold War, which policy was vindicated: Kennan's containment or NSC-68?

16. Did the United States mishandle the termination of the Cold War?

17. To what extent was Soviet policy towards the Third World responsible for its collapse?

18. In the Peloponnesian War, the democratic, commercial, maritime power was defeated by its autocratic, autarkic, continental rival. In the Cold War, the opposite happened. What are the most important factors explaining these different outcomes?

19. In what ways does the Cold War resemble the current global security environment? In what ways does it differ? What are the most useful lessons to be learned from the Cold War in approaching the current age of strategic competition?

20. What lessons might Chinese leaders have drawn from the Cold War?

Readings:

1. Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. Pages 365-629. **BOOK**

[This core reading provides a broad history of the final decades of the Cold War, analyzing the ideological, strategic, and geopolitical factors that influenced strategy and policy by the two superpowers, their allies, and non-aligned actors. Chapters 14-22 are particularly pertinent for understanding how regional conflicts and global power dynamics shaped strategic thinking in the late Cold War period. The conclusion offers some key takeaways that pertain to understanding the contemporary strategic environment and inform the formulation and implementation of national strategy within it.]

2. Kaplan, Fred. *The Bomb: Presidents, Generals, and the Secret History of Nuclear War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020. Pages 100–175. **BOOK**

[Kaplan investigates the development of nuclear strategy during the late Cold War. The reading focuses on presidential decision-making and debates within the U.S. military. The reader will gain insight into nuclear weapons' influence on strategic options and deterrence.]

3. Brands, Hal. *Making the Unipolar Moment, U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016. (Pages 14-39, 53-79, 85-97, 114-118.) **BOOK**

[Brands explores the emergence of American primacy after the Cold War. This reading examines the implications of policy choices while terminating a cold war and transitioning between strategic eras.]

4. Jonathan House. *A Military History of the Cold War, 1962-1991*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. Pages 227-371. **(E-book/Leganto)**

[House presents a study of the relationship between policy and military force during a time of global upheaval and political alignment, providing a perspective on how the realities of time, distance, resources, and military culture often constrained and diverted the inclinations or policies of world leaders.]

5. Gaddis, John Lewis. "Hanging Tough Paid Off." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 45, no. 6 (1989). Pages 18–23. **(Leganto)**

[Gaddis argues that Reagan's firm stance against the USSR hastened the end of the Cold War by reasserting U.S. power and moral clarity. This essay supports the view that strategic resolve and military buildup played a decisive role in achieving geopolitical victory.]

6. Zubok, Vladislav M. "The Collapse of the Soviet Union." In *The Cambridge History of Communism, Volume III: Endgames? Late Communism in Global Perspective, 1968 to the Present*, edited by Juliane Fürst, Silvio Pons, and Mark Selden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pages 250–277. **(E-book/Leganto)**

[Zubok challenges the "Reagan won the Cold War" narrative, showing how Soviet economic mismanagement, unintended reform effects, and nationalism combined with external pressures (IMF, Germany, U.S. policy) to drive collapse.]

7. Boot, Max. "Reagan Didn't Win the Cold War." *Foreign Affairs*, September 6, 2024. **(Leganto)**

[Boot critiques the idea that Reagan's hardline strategy alone won the Cold War, highlighting the importance of Soviet internal collapse and the continuity of U.S. policy. This reading adds a critical counterpoint in debates over the effectiveness of strategic doctrine and leadership.]

8. Toprani, Anand. "The Perils of Comparing Defense Spending: Historical Lessons from the Cold War." *RUSI Journal* vol. 169, no. 4 (2024). Pages 30-38. **(Leganto)**

[Toprani illustrates how flawed thinking from the Cold War still impairs contemporary U.S. assessments of relative U.S. and Chinese military power.]

9. "Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People's Republic of China (Shanghai Communiqué)," February 27, 1972. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, National Archives and Records Administration. **(Leganto)**

[The Shanghai Communiqué offers students a primary-source look at how the United States and China formalized rapprochement, illustrating the diplomatic mechanics of "triangular diplomacy" that made exploitation of the Sino-Soviet split possible.]

X. THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM: MULTI-THEATER WARFARE AGAINST STATE AND NON-STATE ADVERSARIES

General: The Global War on Terror (GWOT) exposed the friction that occurs when a conventional superpower confronts a decentralized, transnational non-state adversary. Since its emergence in the 1990s, Al-Qaeda's stated objectives were global, and it succeeded in conducting spectacular acts of terrorism using minimal military capabilities. Among its primary objectives was to eject Western forces from the Middle East, topple apostate or corrupt governments, and establish a supranational caliphate. Al-Qaeda successfully employed an asymmetric strategy which culminated in the devastating September 11 attacks. In response, the United States mobilized its massive defense bureaucracy, restructured its domestic security apparatus, and launched multi-theater regional wars that led to more than two decades of fighting terrorism across much of the globe. This case explores this complex era of asymmetric warfare that fundamentally tested the utility of conventional military power against an adaptive, ideologically driven network.

The following course themes provide useful tools for examining the critical divide between operational success and strategic victory in this case: the interrelationship among policy, strategy, and operations; interaction, adaptation, and reassessment; and war termination. In two major theaters, U.S. forces dismantled the adversary's physical command hubs but struggled to disrupt Al-Qaeda's true Clausewitzian center of gravity: its resilient and amorphous ideology. By contrast, Al-Qaeda followed Sun Tzu's maxim to "avoid what is strong and strike at what is weak," using low-cost, high-impact terrorism to draw a superpower designed for peer conflict into prolonged economic, political, and military commitments. Over time, the U.S. military adapted by targeting the network's financing, exploiting internal organizational fractures, and relentlessly hunting and eliminating key leaders. This evolution reflected tactical and intelligence flexibility, even as U.S. grand strategy remained constrained by institutional inertia and the limits of a conventional warfare mindset.

Two main theaters in the GWOT exemplified the complexities of multi-theater operations. In both Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), rapid tactical victories on the part of the U.S. forces clashed with the political realities within these two vastly different nations, directly violating Clausewitz's foundational principle that war is a continuation of politics by other means. While the U.S. was able to quickly dismantle the ruling regimes in both Iraq and Afghanistan, these successes created chaotic security vacuums that inadvertently spawned protracted insurgencies and forced a U.S. military built for short-duration operations into costly, population-centric counterinsurgency campaigns. In Afghanistan, the core U.S. objectives began with targeted retribution against al-Qaeda and morphed into a more ambitious nation-building mandate that sought to graft a centralized, Western-style democracy onto a historically fragmented, tribal society. U.S. efforts were undercut because the Taliban used safe havens across the border in Pakistan to regroup and refit.

Similar structural failures and a flawed net assessment also undermined the U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003. After the invasion, the United States adopted policies that weakened its original objectives. The most consequential were de-Ba'athification and the abrupt dissolution of the Iraqi Army, which destroyed the state's security backbone and fueled a virulent sectarian

insurgency that persisted for years. U.S. planners failed to adjust their state-building objectives and instead engaged in mirror-imaging, assuming Iraqis would prioritize democratic institution-building over deeply rooted tribal and sectarian identities. This failure to heed Sun Tzu's dictum to "know your enemy" weakened reassessment efforts and prolonged war termination. Some argue that the United States successfully reassessed and adapted during the 2007 "Surge" by exploiting local tribal fractures to weaken insurgents and reduce casualties. Yet this tactical reset proved temporary and failed to achieve its central objective: lasting political reconciliation between Shia and Sunni factions.

This case provides students with an opportunity to examine how a conflict that began with clear objectives following 9/11 evolved into a two decade-long conflict in multiple theaters. The specific events in this case reshaped regional dynamics and stability and set in motion a profound change in the trajectory of U.S. global influence. This case encourages critical discussions about if and how multi-theater warfare can best be conducted when the adversary employs asymmetric and unconventional strategies. Moreover, it also raises important questions that shape today's geopolitical environment such as whether the vacuum left in Iraq following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein led directly to the ascendance of Iran as a regional hegemon? With respect to incomplete war termination in the Afghan theater, how did the eventual transition of power in Afghanistan degrade U.S. credibility, and what unique strategic opportunities or challenges did it offer to China and Russia? Finally, did the expenditure of trillions of dollars during these multi-decade campaigns divert critical resources away from the strategic pivot to the Indo-Pacific?

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Were the September 11 attacks a good or bad strategic choice for al-Qaeda?

2. Clausewitz stresses that the primary task of political and military leaders is to understand the nature of the war in which they are engaging. What strategic implications derive from an assessment of the nature of this war and how did it change over time?

3. How did the "value of the Object" shape the decisions of U.S. leaders in the war against al Qaeda?

4. Which belligerent—the United States and its allies or al-Qaeda/ISIS —did a better job of adapting and reassessing during the period covered by this case?

5. In what ways does the ideological competition of the War on Terror differ from the ideological competition of the Cold War?

6. Did it make strategic sense for the United States to engage in a multi-theater war during the War on Terror?

7. Was the 2007 Iraq 'Surge' framework exportable to counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan?

8. Which best explains the U.S. inability to defeat its enemy in Vietnam and Afghanistan: the failure of political leaders to produce clear and achievable political aims or the failure of military leaders to implement adequate strategies to defeat the enemy?

9. Were there realistic opportunities for war termination during any of the phases of this conflict? If so, when, and how? If not, why not?

10. Why did the United States and its allies find it difficult to achieve their objectives in Afghanistan and Iraq?

11. Were there realistic opportunities for war termination at any juncture during this long conflict? If so, when, and how? If not, why not?

12. In what ways have culture and religion shaped American involvement in the Middle East and how does this compare with other case studies in this course?

13. Drawing on this case and others in the course, what conditions compel an adversary to reassess and adapt its strategic priorities when engaged in a long-term competition?

14. Drawing on this case and others in the course, under what conditions should a hegemonic power close a major theater of operation?

15. Did the United States achieve "a better state of peace" in the War on Terror?

16. How did elements of "strategic culture" shape the ways in which U.S. leaders approached the problem of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency?

17. In what ways has two decades of counterinsurgency impacted U.S. preparedness for the current era of Great Power Competition.

18. What lessons can be drawn by comparing the war against violent extremism described in this case study to wars against non-state actors in other case studies?

19. Using examples from previous case studies, what mix of military and diplomatic action could have produced either a favorable or acceptable outcome in the Afghanistan theater for the U.S. and its allies.

20. What key lessons on the impact of culture and the role of non-state actors can contemporary leaders draw from the U.S. experience in this case study?

Readings:

1. Barry, Ben. Blood, Metal and Dust, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK 2020 p. 47-513 **(E-book/Leganto)**

[This reading by Brigadier General Ben Barry, a prominent British military historian and combat veteran, provides an authoritative and succinct account of the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.]

2. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004. Pages 55-70, 108-119, 145-56, 330-338. **(Selected Readings)**

[The 9/11 Commission provides background on the emergence of AQ as a threat to the U.S.; the escalation and interaction leading up to 9/11; U.S. attempts to develop an interagency policy strategy match before 9/11; and early strategic planning by the Bush Administration to respond to the 9/11 attacks.]

3. Byman, Daniel. "Terrorism in Africa: The Imminent threat to the United States" Prepared Testimony before the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence of the House Committee on homeland Security, April 29, 2015 **(Selected Readings)**

4. Harmony Program. Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined? West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, May 2012. Pages 1-52. **(Leganto)**

[This analysis of documents found at Osama bin Laden's Abbottabad compound discuss his relationship with AQ's affiliates, the relationship of AQ to Iran and Pakistan, and Bin Laden's plans, including a strategic reassessment due to AQ's declining popularity.]

5. Special Inspector General Report for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) October 30, 2018, Section 3: Reconstruction Update. Pages 43-104. **(Leganto)**

[The SIGAR report provides a candid appraisal of the security and development challenges in Afghanistan and provides a wealth of data and analysis for students to critically evaluate.]

XI. GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN POWER AND THE CHINA CHALLENGE

General: The case reviews contemporary challenges through the lenses of the current National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, which rank theaters of interest as (1) Western Hemisphere, (2) Indo-Pacific, (3) Europe, (4) Middle East, and (5) everywhere else. Of note, these directives essentially treat the Indo-Pacific as indivisible from Western Hemisphere prosperity and security.

This closing case gives us one final opportunity to bridge back through time for lessons of the past while applying strategic theory and course themes to the present. This helps prepare students for the final exam and cement habits of mind that will serve Naval War College graduates well in their future endeavors. The case asks students to survey world affairs and critique U.S. foreign policy and strategy in an age of geopolitical and geoeconomic competition.

Some overarching questions can help frame this tour d'horizon. What are America's purposes in the world? What are the most important security challenges confronting U.S. leaders? Are we witnessing the emergence of a post-American world where the United States is no longer the leading global power? Is major-power war unthinkable, or will arms competitions among the great powers increase the probability of war? How is technological innovation driving the quest for security in the international system? How can the United States deter war and curtail violence in international affairs? Does the United States have sufficient reserves of power to meet challenges posed by international rivals and compete effectively against them?

An assessment of U.S. foreign-policy choices and strategic priorities requires us to examine the sources of power sustaining the United States' international position. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has conducted military campaigns throughout the greater Middle East. Yet an unsettled Western Hemisphere, the growth of China's power, and Russia's turn to aggression have prompted U.S. leaders to reassess their strategic priorities. The war on terror has given way on the list of priorities to efforts to manage competition among great powers and deter conflicts that could upend the international order that has existed since 1945.

The motivations for reshuffling priorities are clear. The Donald J. Trump administration places great stock in managing events in the Western Hemisphere. Counterbalancing the People's Republic of China ranks as a close second priority in security and defense directives, followed by the European and Middle East theaters. The administration regards the Western Hemisphere as a longstanding zone of neglect and has vowed to reassert U.S. dominance under the "Trump Corollary," a revival of the "Theodore Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, the foreign-policy precept whereby the United States forbade European empires from reasserting control over former Latin American colonies and interfering in the affairs of the Americas. . Given that the U.S. government disavowed the Roosevelt Corollary a century ago, its comeback marks a striking turnaround in U.S. foreign policy and strategy. Interestingly, the Trump Corollary concerns itself with constabulary matters such as counternarcotics and immigration as well as the traditional great-power politics that motivated the Roosevelt Corollary. The National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy mark a revolution – or perhaps a counterrevolution – in American strategy and policy.

Turning to Eurasia, the traditional focal point for U.S. policy and strategy, Russia's invasion of Ukraine spelled an end to the relative calm that Europe enjoyed after the Cold War. Vladimir Putin's decision in 2022 to launch a major war in Europe inaugurated the largest and deadliest conflict in Europe since 1945, shocking leaders in Europe and around the world. Many liberal democracies have rallied behind Ukraine, underscoring the burgeoning clash between defenders of the U.S.-led world order and the authoritarian great powers such as Russia, China, and Iran that are intent on overturning it. Deterring an even larger war in Europe and containing Russian power have become crucial aims for the United States.

The peace in Asia also appears increasingly precarious, endangered by Chinese ambitions and military might. While Russia's assault on Ukraine has focused attention on Europe, American leaders view China as the greatest challenge to the liberal world order. China's rulers might use their nation's growing strength to seize Taiwan during the coming decade. By staging military exercises of increasing sweep, China has demonstrated the capability of its armed forces to project power in the Western Pacific. An assault on Taiwan would compel the United States and its major partners – especially Japan, Australia, and South Korea, its principal allies – to choose whether and how to resist Chinee aggression. How to deter such a war ranks foremost in the minds of U.S. and allied leaders. In examining the challenges faced by the United States, this final case study thus pays particular attention to the threat posed by China's ambition to revise the U.S.-led international order.

In examining the challenge posed by China in particular, it is useful to recall Thucydides' claim that honor, fear, and interest are three of the most powerful motives goading competitors to go to war. These three impulses have driven China to acquire greater capabilities to wage war, while fear of China's ambitions and capabilities has prompted the United States and its partners to respond in kind. Rising powers such as Athens, Napoleonic France, imperial and Nazi Germany, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China figure prominently in the Strategy and Policy Course. Why has the rise of some powers – but not others – culminated in a war? As past rising powers have done, could China launch a war yet miscalculate how America responds to aggression? Or will China seek to win without fighting in the tradition of Sun Tzu? Are there actions the United States can take to deter China from using force, or does the decision for war reside in Beijing? Could allies or coalition partners spark a maritime war between the United States and China – much as fighting between Corinth and Corcyra escalated into wholescale conflict between Athens and Sparta?

In many ways the rise of China as a sea power resembles the rivalries Mahan recounted in his classic books. In a 2018 speech during China's largest display of maritime power ever, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping exhorted his country to construct a world-class navy. As Xi spoke, forty-eight surface vessels and submarines steamed across the South China Sea, including the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*, while scores of aircraft streaked overhead. He told the assembled officers and crews that there had never been a more pressing need for a powerful Chinese navy.

This display of naval might fanned Chinese nationalism while rallying support for the regime. Xi's speech calls to mind past appeals to national greatness from rising naval powers. At

the turn of the twentieth century, Kaiser Wilhelm II insisted that his country, historically a land power, urgently needed a larger navy to challenge Britain. The Kaiser saw a formidable navy as a token of Germany's standing in the international arena and a way to unite the German people behind a national endeavor. However, Germany's naval buildup challenged Britain's position as the world's leading sea power. The antagonism inflamed by the Anglo-German rivalry at sea sent a strong undercurrent propelling Germany and Britain toward war. The World War I case study, in other words, sends a warning from the past of the dangers that follow when great sea powers struggle for mastery of the maritime commons and when traditional continental powers attempt to project power into the maritime domain.

Thinking about U.S.-China relations requires understanding the strengths and limitations of all instruments of national power possessed by both countries. Sea powers typically must integrate multiple elements of national power – most notably trade, finance, diplomacy, and military and economic aid. Like Britain and Japan, China depends on food and energy imports. What part will these dependencies play in a competition among the great powers, and more importantly during war? Any US. -China conflict will have global ramifications. How will U.S. allies and enemies respond? And what are the strategic dangers posed by a partnership between Xi's China and Putin's Russia? How can strategic planners develop strategies for global force management to meet threats to the security of the United States and partner countries?

It is vital that political leaders, national security professionals, and strategic planners try to foresee not only how a war might start, but how it might end. What courses of action might deliver desired political objectives at a cost and risk commensurate with the value of the object? What actions would produce a better state of peace, and what actions might make things worse? Of particular importance is the threat of nuclear escalation in a U.S.-China conflict. How might a naval conflict escalate into conventional or even nuclear attacks on each country's homeland? Great-power war will also see the use of advanced technologies that promise to shape the course and outcome of fighting. How can the examples of past technological innovations and transformations in warfare inform decisions about strategy? What roles will data-driven technologies, super intelligence, machine learning, and cyberspace play in a conflict, and which side will derive more competitive advantage from employing them?

Decisions to escalate the fighting demand rigorous moral and ethical questioning as part of strategic deliberations. These considerations attest to the wisdom of Sun Tzu's opening lines: "War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life and death; the road to survival and ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied." This past term we have followed Sun Tzu's mandate to study war – its origins, its conduct, and its consequences – and to master the skills of critical strategic analysis. These skills have never been needed more.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the main sources of American strength and weakness in competitions with international rivals?

2. Is the United States in retreat and decline as a world power? If so, what does it mean for the security and well-being of the American people and for its allies? If the United States is not in decline, why is that the case?

3. What insights can the study of Thucydides provide about the nature of contests between democracies and authoritarian regimes?

4. Before going to war, Pericles, the Athenian leader, and the Spartan king Archidamus provided net assessments about the wisdom of fighting. What would national security professionals present to an American President as the main elements of a net assessment involving a contest between China and the United States? What would Chinese strategic analysts present as a net assessment to China's rulers?

5. To what extent is the Cold War a useful analogy for thinking about the rivalry between the United States and China?

6. What will it take to deter war with China?

7. What strategic guidance can American and Chinese political and military leaders derive from studying Mahan?

8. Are the strategic theories of Mahan and Corbett still applicable?

9. Can the United States retain command of the commons in the face of China's growing operational capabilities to contest the maritime domain?

10. Do nuclear and cyber weapons, super intelligence and machine learning make war between great powers more or less likely? Do these capabilities enhance deterrence or increase the prospects for escalation?

11. In what ways can military planners integrate land, naval, air, nuclear, space, and cyber capabilities to achieve maximum strategic effectiveness?

12. What limitations will constrain the optimal integration of land, naval, air, nuclear, space, and cyber operations?

13. What guidance can the strategic theorists examined in the Strategy and Policy Course offer for understanding conflict in the cyber domain?

14. What role will nuclear weapons play in a conflict involving China and the United States? Can leaders avoid escalation that leads to their use, or is it likely that they will be employed once fighting starts?

15. China and the United States fought each other during the Korean War. What strategic insights does that conflict hold for American planners preparing for war with China? What lessons might Chinese leaders draw from the study of this conflict against the United States?

16. What role will America's allies play in meeting the challenge posed by China?

17. How has Russia's war on Ukraine and the United States months-long war with Iran affected China's foreign-policy ambitions and strategic calculations?

18. How can the United States, as a global power, best balance its capabilities between Russia's threat to European security, Iran's threat to the Middle East, and the strategic challenge posed by China in Asia?

19. Some argue that the United States could stumble into a war with China without first considering the costs, risks, and likely course of a conflict. Could U.S. leaders commit to war without a clear idea of what they want to achieve and what strategy to follow?

20. How might a war between China and the United States end?

Readings:

1. Spykman, Nicholas John. *The Geography of the Peace*, Helen R. Nicholl, ed. Frederick Sherwood Dunn, intro. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1944. Pages 3-13, 35-62. **(Leganto)**

[This wartime classic from Spykman, a professor at Yale, sets the context for thinking about great power strategic competition. It reminds readers that strategy plays out within a fixed arena bounded by geography.]

2. Paine, S. C. M. "By Land or by Sea: Continental Power, Maritime Power, and the Fight for a New World Order." *Foreign Affairs* 104, no. 5 (September/October 2025). Pages 1-12. **(Leganto)**

[This article from former S&P professor Paine reviews the attributes of land and sea power.]

3. O'Rourke, Ron. *Great Power Competition: Implications for Defense – Issues for Congress*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 28, 2024. Pages 1-36. **(Leganto)**

[This regularly updated report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service explores the nature and dynamics of great-power competition, highlighting issues relevant for congressional deliberations. O'Rourke takes account of the China challenge while also widening our view to encompass related challenges from Russia, a "no-limits" partner of China, as well as other competitors such as Iran and North Korea.]

4. Meyer, Peter J. et al. *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Western Hemisphere: Issues for Congress*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 26, 2026. Pages 1-57. **(Selected Readings)**

[This report reviews the counterrevolution in U.S. foreign policy toward the Americas.]

5. U.S. Department of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2025. Pages 1-68. **(Selected Readings)**

[This annual report out of the Pentagon provides a rich net assessment of China's goals, strategies, and capabilities across its various tools of national power. If knowing potential opponents is crucial to operational and strategic success, this document must read for anyone in the U.S. fighting forces and the national security apparatus at large.]

6. Yoshihara, Toshi, and James R. Holmes. *Red Star over the Pacific*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, third edition, 2026. Pages 20-111, 244-319. (**E-book/Leganto)**

[Two leading scholars of sea power and maritime strategy—a former and a current professor in the Strategy and Policy Department—provide a comprehensive analysis of the competition between China and the United States, examining the strategic contours as well as the capabilities of the American and Chinese armed forces.]

7. Economy, Elizabeth. "Xi Jinping and the Strategy of China's Restoration," in *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, Hal Brands, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. Pages 972-995. **BOOK**

[Economy analyzes the internal challenges that confront the Chinese regime. Her analysis highlights the internal problems that will prove difficult for the regime to address. Economic and social difficulties will hinder the regime's ability to achieve its ambitions on the world stage.]

8. Grajewski, Nicole and Ankit Panda. "The Stunning Failure of Iranian Deterrence: And Why It Augurs a More Dangerous World." *Foreign Affairs*, March 19, 2026. Pages 1-8. **(Leganto)**

[This article considers why Iran, a middle power, has been able to defy U.S.-led efforts to deter aggression.]

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

STRATEGY AND POLICY DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Marybeth P. Ulrich serves as professor and chair of the Strategy and Policy Department. She has also taught at the U.S. Army War College, the Naval Postgraduate School, and the U.S. Air Force Academy, where she founded the Academy Oath Project. Her publications include a book, *Democratizing Communist Militaries: The Cases of the Czech and Russian Armed Forces* (University of Michigan Press). Her articles have appeared in *Armed Forces and Society, The Journal of Military Ethics, Parameters, Aether, Strategic Studies Quarterly, and Joint Forces Quarterly* and she has published other monographs, book chapters, and policy pieces on strategic studies, national security democratization, Eurasian security, NATO, and civil-military relations. She served 34 years in the U.S. Air Force, including 15 years in the Air Force Reserve where her last assignment was the Air Reserve Attaché to the Russian Federation. Dr. Ulrich's appointments as the Scowcroft National Security Senior Fellow at the U.S. Air Force Academy and Senior Fellow at West Point's Modern War Institute focus on education for military service in a democracy. Dr. Ulrich received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Illinois and is a Distinguished Graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. She is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is a recipient of the U.S. Army Superior Civilian Service Award for her long service at the U.S. Army War College.

Captain Joe Matison, U.S. Navy, serves as the Deputy Chair/Executive Assistant of Strategy and Policy Department**.** He graduated from the US Naval Academy with a BS in Political Science. He also holds an MA from Webster University and an MA from the US Naval War College. Additionally, he is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College. A career Surface Warfare Officer, Joe has served on a variety of ships to include USS McInerney (FFG 8), USS Ramage (DDG-72), Assault Craft Unit ONE (ACU 1), USS Nicholas, (FFG 47), USS Antietam (CG 54), USS Mahan (DDG 72), and on Carrier Strike Group EIGHT (CSG 8) onboard the USS Harry S Truman (CVN 75). Ashore, he has served on the staff of the Military Sealift Command and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, as a director at the Surface Warfare Officer School, and as a branch head at US Fleet Forces Command.

Dr. Vanya Eftimova Bellinger is an Associate Professor in the Strategy and Policy Department. She specializes in war theory and German military thought. Prior to her appointment at the US Naval War College, Dr Bellinger taught at the US Air University's Global College of Professional Military Education (Maxwell AFB, Alabama) and was a Visiting Professor at the US Army War College (Carlisle, PA). She earned a Ph.D. in history at King's College, London. She is the author of "Marie von Clausewitz: The Woman Behind the Making of On War" (Oxford University Press USA, 2015). She won the 2016 Society for Military History Moncado Prize for her article, "The Other Clausewitz: Findings from the Newly Discovered Correspondence between Marie and Carl von Clausewitz." Dr Bellinger is the first scholar to work with the newly discovered correspondence between the Clausewitz couple and author of numerous articles on Clausewitz's theory and life. She is a trustee of the Anne SK Brown Military Collection at Brown University in Providence, RI.

Shahin Berenji is an Assistant Professor in the Strategy and Policy Department. He earned his Ph.D. and MA from the University of California Los Angeles and his BA from the University of

Southern California. Before arriving at the Naval War College, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Albritton Center for Grand Strategy at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A & M University. From 2020 to 2022, he worked at Southern Methodist University where he served as a Visiting Assistant Professor and Colin Powell Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Political Science and the John G. Tower Center for Public Policy and International Affairs. He studies foreign policy decision-making and diplomacy and has a specialization in the Cold War and regional expertise in the Middle East. His research has been published in such academic journals as *International Security* and *Security Studies* and his commentary and op-eds have been featured online with West Point's the Modern War Institute, *the National Interest*, and *E-International Relations*.

Commander Scott E. Brickner, U.S. Navy, graduated from the University of San Diego with a BS in business administration and the U.S. Naval War College with an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies. A career Surface Warfare Officer, he has made several deployments to the North Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean, Western Pacific, and Arabian Gulf. Commander Brickner's operational tours include USS THE SULLIVANS (DDG 68) as Auxiliaries Officer, USS HUE CITY (CG 66) as Navigator, USS CHAFEE (DDG 90) as Operations Officer, USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CG 58) as Operations Officer and most recently USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) as Operations Officer. As the Air Defense Liaison Officer assigned to COMCARSTRKGRU 2, he deployed aboard USS GEORGE H W BUSH during a ten-month combat deployment in support of OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE. Additionally, he has served at Surface Warfare Officers School as a Fleet Training (N72) instructor and a Maritime Warfare (N73) instructor.

Michael A. Dennis is an Associate Professor who received his doctorate in the history of science and technology from Johns Hopkins University in 1991. After postdoctoral fellowships at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, as well as the Science Studies Program at the University of California, San Diego, he served as an Assistant Professor in Cornell University's Department of Science and Technology Studies and in the Peace Studies Program. After Cornell, he worked as an adjunct at several universities in the Washington, DC area, including Georgetown University's security studies, and its science, technology and international affairs programs; he also taught courses on technology and national security in George Mason University's BioDefense program. His research focuses on the intersection of science, technology and the military with a special emphasis on World War II and the Cold War. He is currently completing a book manuscript entitled, "A Change of State: Technical Practice, Political Culture and the Making of Early Cold America." His 2013 article, "Tacit Knowledge as a Factor in the Proliferation of WMD: The Example of Nuclear Weapons," won a prize from the Editorial Board of Studies in Intelligence. In 2018, he and Professor Anand Toprani received a grant from the Stanton Foundation to develop a course, "The Political Economy of Strategy," for both NWC and Brown University students.

Commander Jonathan Durham, U.S. Navy, joined the JMO department in the winter of 2025 as a permanent military professor. He received a B.S. in electrical engineering from the U. S. Naval Academy, an M.S. in computer science from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, an MBA from San Diego State University, and his Ph.D. in information sciences from the Naval Postgraduate School. His research focuses on value-aware IT investments. He is a former Navy

information professional, and his most recent assignment was as a requirements officer in the Digital Warfare Office, OPNAV N9D.

Colonel Patrick F. Eldridge, U.S. Marine Corps, joined the Strategy and Policy Department in the Summer of 2026 after serving one year as military faculty in the Halsey Alfa Advanced Research Program. Before arriving at the Naval War College, Colonel Eldridge served as the Chief of Staff of the 1st Marine Division. A career artillery officer, Colonel Eldridge has commanded at the O-5 level, leading 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, and the O-6 level, leading the 11th Marine Regiment. He has completed four combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, serving as an ANGLICO Joint Terminal Attack Controller, a Civil Affairs Team Leader, and a MEB level Fires and Targeting Officer. His other key assignments include serving in the NORAD-U.S. Northern Command Current Operations (J33) and Qualification and Training (J73) Directorates. He also served as the Commandant of the Marine Corps Fellow at Yale University to the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy, as well as military faculty and Leadership Department Head at Marine Corps Command and Staff College. In addition, he served as the first Deputy Commander for Integration and Theater Littoral Warfare at CTF-76. Colonel Eldridge earned a B.A.S in Secondary Education and History from Salve Regina University in 1998 and an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies from The U.S. Naval War College in 2010. He is also a 2025 graduate of The Joint and Combined Warfare School, Norfolk, VA.

Marc A. Genest is the Forrest Sherman Professor of Public Diplomacy in the Strategy and Policy Department and is Area Study Coordinator for the Insurgency and Terrorism electives program. From 2008-16, he served as the founding Co-Director of the Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups (CIWAG) at the Naval War College. In 2011, Professor Genest was a civilian advisor at Division Headquarters for Regional Command—South in Kandahar, Afghanistan where he assessed the division's counterinsurgency strategy. In 2009, Genest received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service from the Department of the Army for outstanding service as a Special Adviser to the Commander of Task Force Mountain Warrior while stationed in Regional Command-East in Afghanistan. Dr. Genest earned his PhD from Georgetown University in international politics. Before coming to the Naval War College, Professor Genest taught at Georgetown University, the U.S. Air War College, and the University of Rhode Island. While at the University of Rhode Island, Professor Genest received the University's Teaching Excellence Award. He is also a political commentator for local, national and international radio news and television stations as well as for local and national print media. In addition, Genest worked on Capitol Hill for Senator John Chafee and Representative Claudine Schneider. His books include *Negotiating in the Public Eye: The Impact of the Press on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Negotiations*; *Conflict and Cooperation: Evolving Theories of International Relations*; and *Stand! Contending Issues in World Politics*. He is the co-editor of *From Quills to Tweets: The Evolution of American Wartime and Revolutionary Communication Strategies*. He has also written articles dealing with international relations theory, strategic communication, American foreign policy and public opinion.

Commander Joshua A. Hammond, U.S. Navy, graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in classical languages and the U.S. Naval War College with an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies. While at the NWC, he received the Adm. Richard G. Colbert

Memorial Prize for professional writing and research. A career naval flight officer, he has over 2,300 hours and 500 carrier landings in the F-14D and F/A-18F in support of operations in the Arabian Gulf and Western Pacific. Other assignments include air operations officer on USS CARL VINSON and an exchange assignment with the Royal Navy in carrier doctrine development.

James R. Holmes is the inaugural J. C. Wylie Chair of Maritime Strategy. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, Salve Regina University, Providence College, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Jim graduated from the Naval War College in 1994 and earned the Naval War College Foundation Award as the top graduate in his class. He previously served on the faculty of the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs, where he remains a Faculty Fellow. He is a Distinguished Fellow at the Brute Krulak Center, Marine Corps University, and an Adjunct Professor at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. A former U.S. Navy surface warfare officer, he served as engineering and gunnery officer on board the battleship *Wisconsin*, directed an engineering course at the Surface Warfare Officers School Command, and taught Strategy and Policy at the Naval War College, Fleet Seminar Program. His books include *Theodore Roosevelt and World Order*; *Chinese Naval Strategy in the 21st Century: The Turn to Mahan; Indian Naval Strategy in the 21st Century*; *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age;* and three editions of *Red Star over the Pacific.* His books have appeared on the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Indo-Pacific Command professional reading lists since 2012.

Timothy D. Hoyt is the John Nicholas Brown Chair of Counterterrorism Studies and serves as Academic Director and Senior Mentor for the Advanced Strategy Program. Hoyt earned his undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College, and his PhD in international relations and strategic studies from the Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Before joining the Naval War College's Strategy and Policy Department, he taught at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Dr. Hoyt's research interests include South Asian security, irregular warfare in the 20th and 21st centuries, national security policy in the developing world, nuclear proliferation, and the relationship between insurgency and terrorism. He previously served as Co-Director of the Indian Ocean Regional Studies Group at the Naval War College. He is the author of *Military Industries and Regional Defense Policy: India, Iraq and Israel* and over fifty articles and book chapters on international security and military affairs. He is currently working on a book on the strategy of the Irish Republican Army from 1913-2005, and on projects examining the future of the U.S.-Indian security relationship, the strategy of the African National Congress in the South African freedom struggle, Israel's defense industry, and the relationship between irregular warfare and terrorism in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Anatol Klass is an Assistant Professor of Strategy and Policy who graduated from Harvard College in 2017 with an AB in History and East Asian Studies. He received an MA in International Affairs from Tsinghua University. He studied history at the University of California, Berkeley, receiving an MA in 2021 and a PhD in 2024. The central focus of his research is modern Chinese history, and he is currently working on a book project about how various Chinese regimes have built up their diplomatic capital in the past century, producing their own institutions, ideas, and personnel with the singular aim of asserting Chinese interests

on the international stage. Before joining the Naval War College, he was a fellow at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, the Belfer Center, and the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies.

Heidi E. Lane is a Professor of Strategy and Policy and Director of the Greater Middle East Research Study Group at the Naval War College. She specializes in comparative politics and international relations of the Middle East with a focus on security sector development, ethnic and religious nationalism, and rule of law in transitioning societies. Her edited book *Building Rule of Law in the Arab World and Beyond* was published in 2016 with co-editor Eva Bellin. She is currently completing research for a book on counterterrorism and state liberalization in the Middle East. Dr. Lane has served as a visiting research affiliate with the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a U.S. Fulbright scholar in Syria, and as a research fellow with the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. She is currently a senior associate at the Center for Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups (CIWAG) at the Naval War College. She holds an MA and PhD in Islamic Studies from the Center for Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, and a BA from the University of Chicago, and is trained in Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian and is proficient in German.

Jamie Martin, Department of State, graduated from Bryn Mawr College with a BA in Political Science and Spanish and from the London School of Economics and Political Science with an MSc in Government. She is a senior foreign service officer in the Department of State, where she has served in eight overseas assignments in seven different countries. Most recently, Ms. Martin was the Embassy Spokesperson and Press Attaché at the U.S. Mission to Spain. She previously served as the Director of Programs and Exchanges and Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Mission to the European Union. She served as the Director of the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs from 2016-2019 and the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission from May 2018-June 2019 at the U.S. Embassy Nassau, The Bahamas. She has also served in London, United Kingdom; two tours in Islamabad, Pakistan; Cape Town, South Africa; and Mexico City, Mexico. Prior to joining the State Department, she worked as an editor for the Congressional Research Service and an Online Editor for CNNenEspañol.com. She speaks fluent Spanish and has studied French and Urdu.

John H. Maurer serves as the Alfred Thayer Mahan Professor of Sea Power and Grand Strategy. He also holds the title of Distinguished University Professor. He is a graduate of Yale College and holds a MALD and PhD in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He is the author or editor of books examining the outbreak of the First World War, military interventions in the developing world, naval competitions and arms control between the two world wars, a study on Winston Churchill and British grand strategy, and the great-power contest in Asia and the Pacific that led to Pearl Harbor. He served for eight years as Chairman of the Strategy and Policy Department. He teaches in the advanced strategy program and an elective course on Winston Churchill and the history of the two world wars. Before coming to the College, he held the positions of research fellow and executive editor of *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He served on the Secretary of the Navy John Lehman's special advisory committee on naval history. In

recognition of his contribution to professional military education, he has received the U.S. Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Award and Superior Civilian Service Award.

Kevin D. McCranie is the Philip A. Crowl Professor of Comparative Strategy. He earned a BA in history and political science from Florida Southern College, and an MA and PhD in history from Florida State University. Before joining the faculty of the Naval War College, he taught history at Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Georgia. Specializing in warfare at sea, navies, sea power, and joint operations, he is the author of *Admiral Lord Keith and the Naval War against Napoleon* as well as *Utmost Gallantry: The U.S. and Royal Navies at Sea in the War of 1812*. His recent writing compares the sea power and maritime strategic theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett in a Naval Institute Press book titled *Mahan, Corbett, and the Foundations of Naval Strategic Thought*. His articles have appeared in *War on the Rocks, Texas National Security Review, U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings Online, Naval History, Journal of Military History, Naval War College Review*, and *The Northern Mariner*.

Lieutenant Colonel Brendan R. Neagle, U.S. Marine Corps, is an Infantry Officer. His operational experience includes two tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, seven Marine Expeditionary Unit deployments to the European, African, Central, and Indo-Pacific theaters, and one deployment on the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Africa. He holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy, an M.A. in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College, an A.A. in Korean from the Defense Language Institute, and is a graduate of the Joint Forces Staff College and the Korean Joint Forces Military University.

Colonel Matthew P. Nischwitz, U.S. Army joined the U.S. Naval War College in 2020 as a member of the Strategy and Policy Department. He commanded at the battalion level and served in various staff positions. His past assignments included the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve, U.S. Army Transportation School, 17th Field Artillery Brigade and U.S. Military Academy. He received his B.S. from Indiana University and an M.A. from Columbia University and the United States Naval War College.

Michelle D. Paranzino is the T.C. Sass Chair in Maritime Irregular Warfare, Director of the Latin America Studies Group, and an Associate Professor in the Strategy & Policy Department. Her research areas include US foreign policy, Latin America, Soviet foreign policy, and the international Cold War. She is the author of *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents* (Hackett, 2018), and her work has appeared in several edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals such as *Diplomatic History*, the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, and the *International History Review*. Before joining the Naval War College, she was a Dickey Center and Dean of the Faculty Postdoctoral Fellow in International Security and US Foreign Policy at Dartmouth College and a Summer Research Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Kennan Institute. She earned a Ph.D. in History at the University of Texas at Austin, an M.A. in History at California State University Northridge, and a B.A. in History at University of California Santa Cruz. She is currently writing a book about Ronald Reagan and the War on Drugs.

Michael F. Pavković is the William Ledyard Rodgers Professor of Naval History at the College and also serves as Senior Historian for the John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research. He received his BA in history and classics from Pennsylvania State University and his PhD in History from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Before joining the Naval War College, he served as an Associate Professor of History at Hawai'i Pacific University, where he also coordinated graduate and undergraduate programs in Diplomacy and Military Studies. He has published a number of articles, book chapters, and reviews on topics relating to ancient, early modern, and Napoleonic military history. He is co-author of *What is Military History?* which is now in its 3rd edition. He is currently completing a book on sea power in the ancient world.

Captain Joseph A. Pommerer, U.S. Navy, graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a BA in Systems Engineering and the U.S. Naval War College with an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies. A career Naval Flight Officer, he has over 2,750 flight hours and 600 carrier-arrested landings in the F-14D Tomcat and F/A-18F Super Hornet. His operational tours include multiple deployments to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf with Fighter Squadron THREE ONE (VF-31), as Operations and Safety Officer with Strike Fighter Squadron ONE ZERO THREE (VFA-103), and as Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of Strike Fighter Squadron NINE FOUR (VFA-94) flying combat missions in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR), and Operation FREEDOM SENTINEL (OFS). Other assignments include flight instructor at Strike Fighter Squadron ONE ZERO SIX (VFA-106), assistant operations officer at Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN (CVW-17) where he deployed in support of JTF-Haiti during Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE and Operation SOUTHERN SEAS 2010, as Strike Syndicate Lead for Carrier Strike Group FIFTEEN (CSG-15), and as operations officer and prospective commanding officer course lead at the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center.

Commander Daniel Post, **U.S. Navy**, joined the Strategy and Policy department in the fall of 2021 as a Permanent Military Professor. He is also the Co-Director of the Perspectives on Modern War (PMW) course. He received a B.S. in Mathematics from the United States Naval Academy (with Honors), an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College (with Highest Distinction), an MA in Political Science from Brown University, and his PhD in Political Science (International Relations) from Brown University. His research focuses on nuclear strategy and policy, deterrence, escalation dynamics, limited nuclear war, and conflict termination. This includes studies of past wargaming and military exercises to explore potential escalation dynamics in limited nuclear wars. Additionally, he conducts experimental survey work and interview-based research centered on nuclear deterrence strategies and escalation dynamics. He is a former Navy Helicopter Pilot, and his most recent assignment was as Nuclear Strike Advisor and the Chief of Strike Advisor Training, Global Operations Center at U.S. Strategic Command.

Lieutenant Colonel Luis R. Rivera, U.S. Army, joined the Strategy and Policy Department in 2022. LTC Rivera has commanded at the company and battalion level. Additionally, he has served tours as a member of the general staff at the strategic, operational, and tactical level commands. His combat and operational deployments include Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Poland, and Germany whilst supporting U.S. Army and joint named operations throughout the Middle East. He is a graduate of the Sistema Universitario Ana G. Mendez (B.S. in Biology) and the

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (M.S. in Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management). LTC Rivera's professional military education includes the Combined Logistics Captain's Career Course, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the Command and General Staff School for Command Preparation – Battalion Pre-Command Course.

Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Romaneski, U.S. Army, is joining the US Naval War College's Strategy and Policy Department for the 2025-2026 academic year after completing battalion command in Fort Wainwright, Alaska. He is an Aviation officer whose previous command and staff positions include extensive time in Europe, the U.S. Military Academy, Fort Carson, Colorado, and Fort Cavazos, Texas. He has a BA in history from James Madison University and a PhD in military history from the Ohio State University.

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes is a professor who earned a BA from the University of Texas. He has an M.A. from the University of Kentucky and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. All three degrees are in history. He has written seven books. His most recent is The Battle of Manila: Poisoned Victory in the Pacific War (2025).

George D. Satterfield is an Associate Professor who holds a PhD in history from the University of Illinois. Before joining the Naval War College, he served as an assistant professor at Morrisville State College, and as an associate professor at Hawaii Pacific University. Dr. Satterfield is the author of *Princes, Posts, and Partisans: The Army of Louis XIV and Partisan Warfare in the Netherlands, 1673-1678*, which received a distinguished book award from the Society for Military History. Dr. Satterfield is also the author of articles on several topics in military history, including irregular warfare and revolutions in military affairs.

Jeff Shaw is a Professor of Strategy and Policy in the College of Distance Education. He is the author of *The Ethiopian-Adal War, 1529-1543* (Helion, 2021), the first book published in any language to cover the fourteen-year conflict which nearly resulted in the conquest of Christian Ethiopia in the sixteenth century. He also wrote *Illusions of Freedom: Thomas Merton and Jacques Ellul on Technology and the Human Condition* (Wipf & Stock, 2014). His other works include the 3-volume *War and Religion: An Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict* (ABC-CLIO, 2017) which was selected by the American Library Association as a "Best Reference Source" in 2018. He co-edited both the 2-volume *Religion and Contemporary Politics* (ABC-CLIO, 2019), and *Bound to the Coast of Africa* (Stone Tower, 2016). Professor Shaw's book chapters include "The Ogaden War" in *Peripheries of the Cold War*, *Comparative Studies from a Global Perspective Vol. 3*, (Königshausen & Neumann, 2015) and "War and Technology: Nanotechnology, Precision, and Globalization" in *The Means to Kill - On the Interrelationship of War and Technology from Ancient Rome to the Age of Drones*, (McFarland, 2015).

David R. Stone serves as the William E. Odom Professor of Russian Studies. He received his BA in history and mathematics from Wabash College and his PhD in history from Yale University. He taught at Hamilton College and at Kansas State University, where he served as director of the Institute for Military History. He was also a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. His first book *Hammer and Rifle: The Militarization of the Soviet Union, 1926-1933* won the Shulman Prize of the Association for

Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies and the Best First Book Prize of the Historical Society. He has also published *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya*, and *The Russian Army in the Great War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1917*. He edited *The Soviet Union at War, 1941-1945*; *The Russian Civil War: Campaigns and Operations*; and *The Russian Civil War: Military and Society*. He is the author of several dozen articles and book chapters on Russian / Soviet military history and foreign policy. Professor Stone also has two lecture series with The Great Courses on *Battlefield Europe: The Second World War* and *War in the Modern World*.

Anand Toprani is a Professor of Strategy and Policy specializing in diplomatic and military history, energy geopolitics, and political economy. Anand is a graduate of Cornell, Oxford, and Georgetown, and he has held fellowships at Yale and Harvard as well as from the Stanton and Smith Richardson foundations. He is the author of *Oil and the Great Powers: Britain and Germany, 1914-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2019), which received the 2020 Richard W. Leopold Prize from the Organization of American Historians, and *The Man in the Middle: John Lehman, Naval Power, and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 2027); the co-author with RADM Dave Oliver (USN-ret.) of *American Defense Reform: Lessons from Failure and Success in Navy History* (Georgetown University Press, 2022); and the co-editor with S.C.M. Paine of *The Strategy of Sanctions: From Antiquity to the 21st Century* (University of Michigan Press, 2026). Anand previously served as an historian at the U.S. Department of State, an intelligence analyst at U.S. Central Command, a Visiting Assistant/Associate Professor at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, a member of the Planning Board of the City of Newport, RI, and a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is currently a Life Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Jeane Kirkpatrick Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and a contributor to the official histories of the 1939 Polish campaign and of U.S. Naval Intelligence (Project 2032).

Jesse C. Tumblin is an Assistant Professor of Strategy and Policy specializing in political and military history, conceptions of security, and the current and former British world. He earned his PhD and MA from Boston College and his BA from the University of Tennessee. He is a past Fellow in International Security Studies at Yale University. He is the author of *The Quest for Security: Sovereignty, Race, and the Defense of the British Empire, 1898-1931*, as well as an article on Britain's attempts to secure its Indo-Pacific empire that won the Saki Ruth Dockrill Prize for International History from the Institute for Historical Research, University of London.

Lieutenant Colonel Dan "Cowboy" Wallace, U.S. Air Force, commissioned through Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Alabama after receiving his B.A. in Criminal Justice. He attended pilot training at Laughlin AFB, TX and was assigned to fly KC-135/Rs at Robins AFB, GA. He then volunteered for Air Force Special Operations Command and flew U-28/As. During this time, he completed his MA in International Relations from Troy University. His combat and operational deployments include UAE, Qatar, Afghanistan, and Djibouti. After his operational assignments, he has spent the last 15 years in various staff positions ranging from the Wing (1 SOW, 352 SOW) to Operational level (ACC, SOCCENT).

Andrew R. Wilson is the John A. van Beuren Chair of Asia-Pacific Studies. After majoring in East Asian studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, he went on to earn a PhD in

History and East Asian Languages from Harvard University. Before joining the War College faculty, Wilson taught courses in Chinese history and on the Chinese diaspora at both Harvard and at Wellesley College. He has lectured on Chinese history, Asian military affairs, and the classics of strategic theory at military schools and civilian universities across the U.S. and around the world and collaborated on curriculum with command and staff colleges in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. He has written several pieces on Chinese military history, Chinese sea power, and Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, including a new introduction to Lionel Giles' classic translation of Sun Tzu. His books include *Ambition and Identity: Chinese Merchant-Elites in Colonial Manila, 1885-1916*; *The Chinese in the Caribbean; War, Virtual War and Human Security*; *China's Future Nuclear Submarine Force*, and the forthcoming *Traversing the Belt and Road*. Professor Wilson is also featured on *The Great Courses* with lecture series including *Sun Tzu's Art of War, Masters of War: History's Greatest Strategic Thinkers, and Understanding Imperial China: Dynasties, Life, and Culture.*

INTRODUCTION	**9 NOV**	**PROF ULRICH**	**Strategy and Policy: Concept and Course**
CASE I: **THEORIES OF WAR, STRATEGY, AND GREAT POWER COMPETITIONS**	**13 NOV** **13 NOV** **16 NOV** **16 NOV**	**PROF HOYT** **PROF BELLINGER** **PROF WILSON** **PROF HOLMES**	**Strategies in War and Great Power Competition** **Clausewitz's On War** **Sun Tzu and the Art of War** **Mahan and Sea Power**
CASE II: **PELOPONNESIAN WAR: PEACE, WAR, AND DETERRENCE IN THE LONG-TERM COMPETITION**	**20 NOV** **20 NOV** **24 NOV** **24 NOV**	**CDR HAMMOND** **PROF MAURER** **PROF PAVKOVIĆ** **PROF ULRICH**	**Rise of Athens** **The Peace of Nicias and Sicily** **The Fall of Athens** **International Relations Theory and Strategy**
CASE III: **THE WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON: MARITIME VERSUS CONTINENTAL SECURITY STRATEGIES**	**8 DEC** **8 DEC** **8 DEC** **9 DEC**	**PROF SATTERFIELD** **PROF PAVKOVIĆ** **PROF MEEKS** **PROF MCCRANIE**	**The French Revolution: Military Revolutions and Great Power Competition** **Napoleon's Aims and Way of War** **Coalitions and the Downfall of Napoleon** **Corbett & Naval Strategy**
CASE IV: **IMPERIAL GERMANY FROM THE WARS OF UNIFICATION TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR-THE RISE & FALL OF A PEER COMPETITOR**	**15 DEC** **15 DEC** **16 DEC** **16 DEC**	**PROF MAURER** **PROF TUMBLIN** **PROF BELLINGER** **PROF MCCRANIE**	**Bismarck and the Unification of Germany** **The British Empire and the Road to War** **Germany Strategy in the First World War** **The War at Sea, 1914-1918**

CASE V: **THE INTERWAR WORLD, 1919-1939: THE CHALLENGES OF WINNING THE PEACE, AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF GREAT POWER COMPETITION**	**5 JAN** **5 JAN** **5 JAN** **ASYNCH**	**PROF TUMBLIN** **PROF KLASS** **PROF SATTERFIELD** **PROF TOPRANI**	**Britain's Grand Strategy** **The Unraveling of Asia** **Military Transformation in the Interwar Period** **The Great Depression and its Consequences**
CASE VI: **THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE RISE OF THE SUPERPOWERS**	**12 JAN** **12 JAN** **13 JAN** **13 JAN**	**PROF BERENJI** **PROF STONE** **PROF MAURER** **PROF MCCRANIE**	**The Axis Powers** **Stalin and Soviet Grand Strategy** **FDR and US Grand Strategy** **Struggle for Sea Power and Naval Mastery**
CASE VII: **THE EARLY COLD WAR: NATIONAL SECURITY, IDEOLOGY, AND DOMESTIC POLITICS, 1945-1953**	**19 JAN** **21 JAN** **21 JAN** **21 JAN**	**PROF POST** **PROF DENNIS** **PROF KLASS** **PROF SARANTAKES**	**Evolution of US Nuclear Strategy** **US Post-War Strategy** **Communist Post-War Grand Strategy** **NSC-68 and the Korean War**
CASE VIII: **THE MIDDLE COLD WAR: US, SOVIET, AND CHINESE COMPETITION IN THE THIRD WORLD, 1953-1968**	**28 JAN** **28 JAN** **29 JAN** **29 JAN**	**PROF WILSON** **PROF PARANZINO** **PROF ULRICH** **PROF GENEST**	**Mao's Theory in the Guerilla Warfare** **The Cold War in the Third World** **Civil-Military Relations Theory** **US Strategy in Vietnam**

CASE IX: **THE LATE COLD WAR: FROM DÉTENTE TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, 1969-1991**	**4 FEB** **4 FEB** **5 FEB** **5 FEB**	**PROF GENEST** **PROF STONE** **PROF DENNIS** **PROF HOYT**	**Rise and Fall of Détente** **Soviet Strategy and the Fall of the Soviet Empire** **End of the Cold War** **The Unipolar Moment**
CASE X: **THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM: MULTI-THEATER WARFARE AGAINST STATE AND NON-STATE ADVERSARIES**	**FEB 10** **FEB 10** **FEB 11** **FEB 11**	**PROF LANE** **PROF GENEST** **PROF ROMANESKI** **PROF BERENJI**	**Overview of the Global War on Terrorism** **Afghanistan: Retrospect and Prospect** **The War in Iraq** **Strategic Repercussions of the Global War on Terrorism**
CASE XI: **GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN POWER AND THE CHINA CHALLENGE**	**18 FEB** **18 FEB** **19 FEB** **19 FEB**	**PROF STONE** **PROF WILSON** **PROF HOLMES** **PROF HOYT**	**Russia and the World Order** **Chinese Power and Purpose in the World** **Sea Power in the World** **Strategy in the 21st Century**

Updated 09/21/2026